DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 218 012 PS 012 935

AUTHOR Stixrud, William R.
TITLE Plain Talk About Early Education and Development.
INSTITUTION Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Center for Early Education and Development.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 135p.
AVAILABLE FROM CEED/University of Minnesota, 51 E. River Rd., Minneapolis, MN 55455 ($6.50, including postage; $5.50 each for 10 or more).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Certification; *Child Development; Disabilities; *Early Childhood Education; Identification; Mainstreaming; Parent Education; *Political Influences; *Public Policy; Research Problems; *Research Utilization; *Social Influences; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Parenting

ABSTRACT

The answers of scholars and leaders in the fields of early education and child development to four broad interview questions concerning sociopolitical factors influencing early childhood care and education have been organized topically in the chapters of this book. In chapter 1, technical and ethical problems in early identification of actual and potential handicapping conditions are discussed. The controversial topic of mainstreaming handicapped young children is the focus of chapter 2. In chapter 3 questions are raised about how people are "socialized" into parenthood, and the appropriate content and structure of parent education programs are considered. Chapter 4 deals with major issues in teacher education and certification, including identification of the requisite skills for effective teaching, certification of child care workers, and the problem of delivering inservice training. The contexts for research and ways research affects the lives of young children are considered in chapter 5. Chapter 6 focuses on problems of interpreting research findings and on challenges of investigating children's development in such interacting contexts as the home, school, and neighborhood. Discussion in chapter 7 centers on issues of public policy, such as public versus private delivery of preschool education, federal support of day care, and the justification of continued federal support for early childhood education. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED218012

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

X Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Plain Talk

About Early Education and Development

Based on conversations with:

Steven Asher
Robert Granger
Frances D. Horowitz
Mary Lane
Samuel J. Meisels
Maynard C. Reynolds
Henry Riccuiti
Rosalyn Rubin
Donald Stedman
Joseph Stevens

Technical Editor, Erna Fishhaut

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Erna Fishhaut

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

William R. Stixrud

PS 01 2935

Center for Early Education and Development
College of Education
University of Minnesota

Copyright © 1982 by
Center for Early Education and Development
College of Education
University of Minnesota
226 Child Development Building
51 East River Road
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

FOREWORD

It has always seemed to me ironic that the first words of a volume to be read are in fact the last to be written; furthermore, they have come from the pen of someone other than the author. Irony notwithstanding, I appreciate the opportunity to prepare the reader for a rewarding experience. This book is a unique attempt to capture the thoughts, ideas, and impressions of a group of scholars and leaders in the fields of early education and child development. These contributors, in the informal climate of an interview, were provided the opportunity to reflect upon the state of the art and science in their fields of expertise, as well as to consider socio-political factors influencing research and practice in the fields of early childhood care and education.

The people whose interviews are the raw material of this book were guest faculty of the Interdisciplinary Professional Growth Institutes in Early Childhood Education (PGI). These institutes were sponsored by the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) at the University of Minnesota and funded by the Bush Foundation.

The Center, established in 1973, is an interdepartmental unit of our College of Education, drawing its faculty and student members from a variety of academic units within the University, including the Institute of Child Development; the Psychology in the Schools Program and Special Education Program of the Department of Psychoeducational Studies; and the Departments of Curriculum and Instruction; Home Economics Education; Physical Education; and Family Social Sciences. In addition to faculty and students, participants in CEED activities are affiliated with public and private child care and preschool facilities, community and government agencies, and other interested groups.

CEED's programs and projects are designed in keeping with its diverse mission. One purpose of the Center is to prepare and disseminate research and child development information to practitioners and others interested in young children. The three-year PGI series offered professional growth opportunities for people with minimal academic preparation in child development and/or early education who have become increasingly involved in serving young children and their families. Trainees, recruited nationally as well as from Minnesota, were selected on the basis of their strong credentials within their disciplines and their positions of leadership in delivery of services or in training service providers. Professions represented by the trainees included business, elementary education, health education, law, nursing, pediatrics, clinical and school psychology, school administration, social work, sociology, special education, speech pathology, and urban planning. Participants held positions in state and federal agencies, universities and colleges, public schools, hospitals, and private service agencies. Each year's guest faculty addressed the participants through a variety of instructional formats, ranging from two day, intensive workshops to a five-week summer course.

In total, the PGI program directly affected over 175 trainees as well as many university faculty, students, and members of the Twin Cities professional community who attended special guest faculty colloquia planned in conjunction with the program. The potential impact of the PGI program on the work of these individuals can only be guessed. Furthermore, guest faculty were challenged and influenced by exchanges with trainees who filtered the proceedings through the lenses of their own disciplinary perspectives.

This book is another product of the PGI program. Bill Stixrud, a graduate student in our Psychology in the Schools Program, has done an outstanding job of culling, refining, and organizing literally hundreds of pages of audio-tape transcipts. In addition, he has maintained communication with the PGI faculty who are quoted, enabling them to put their best words forward. Going beyond these herculean tasks, Stixrud has written a highly readable, jargon-free, contemporary book that accurately portrays the major concerns of early childhood researchers, providers, and policy makers. Because the author has been able to step into the

shoes of his readers, he has highlighted certain issues that will be of particular interest to special constituencies within the early childhood community.

I strongly recommend the pages that follow to anyone who wishes to be more knowledgeable about the way things are and the way they might be for young children and their families in America today. And they are written in PLAIN TALK!

Richard A. Weinberg
Professor and Co-Director
Center for Early Education
and Development
University of Minnesota

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the many people who contributed their ideas and expertise to the production of this volume. I am also grateful to the Bush Foundation for the funding of the Professional Growth Institutes which made this project possible.

Particular thanks go, of course, to the scholars who agreed to be interviewed for this book. By cheerfully editing and updating the manuscript of their "talk" a full year after the interviews, they went well beyond the call of duty.

The interviewing skills of several fellow graduate students helped to elicit the fascinating material that makes up these chapters; I am thus grateful to Jan Bloom, Steve Erickson, Patricia Evans, Kathleen McNellis, Steve Poland, Martha Rosen, and Starr Stixrud.

Shirley Fragale painstakingly transcribed the interview tapes, an enormous job for which she deserves a rare medal.

Judy Brady's assistance in editing the rough draft interview transcripts and her insightful suggestions regarding the structure of the book were an enormous help, and Martha Rosen's careful proofing and editing were essential.

Special thanks go to my advisor, Richard Weinberg, for his general support and his careful reading of the manuscript.

Finally, I am particularly indebted to Erna Fishhaut, the masterful administrator of the Center for Early Education and Development, who suggested the format of the book and generously lent her editorial time and expertise.

William Stixrud

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword		i
Acknowledgments		iv
The Guest Faculty		vi
Introduction		1
Chapters		
1	Screening and Early Identification	5
2	Mainstreaming	17
3	Parenting and Parent Education	31
4	Teacher Training and Certification	41
5	The Uses of Research	60
6	Research Applications: Cautions & Challenges	77
7	Policy Issues	94
Epilogue		118

THE GUEST FACULTY

The people listed here were guest faculty in the Professional Growth Institutes in Early Education and Child Development for an interdisciplinary audience at the University of Minnesota:

STEVEN ASHER

Professor of Educational Psychology
University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign

Dr. Asher is one of the country's leading researchers in the areas of peer relations and social skills training. He has contributed several articles and chapters that contribute to the understanding of friendship formation and intervention with socially unskilled children. Dr. Asher has recently turned his attention to the complex problem of assessing socially isolated children and maintains a lively interest in the interface between research and practice.

ROBERT GRANGER

Executive Director,
Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program
Bank Street College of Education
Washington, D.C.

As director of the CDA credentialing program, Dr. Granger provides leadership to the national movement toward competency based certification of child care workers. Formerly Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at Georgia State University, Dr. Granger has written and edited important articles, chapters, and books dealing with the education of minority children.

FRANCES D. HOROWITZ

Vice Chancellor for Research, Graduate Studies,
and Public Service
University of Kansas

While carrying out major administrative responsibilities, Dr. Horowitz continues to publish extensively in the field of child development, most recently in the areas of infant development and assessment. Dr. Horowitz, a former dean and professor of Human Development and Family Life, has played an active leadership role in professional organizations, including her term as president of the Division of Developmental Psychology of the American Psychological Association. She is also the current president of the Center for Research, Inc.

MARY LANE

Professor Emeritus
San Francisco State College

As a Professor Emeritus, Dr. Lane continues her close involvement as a consultant and project director in the education of young children. She is the former director of a federally funded demonstration program called Nurseries in Cross Cultural Education and is currently the director of the Oakland Parent and Child Center. She has authored and co-authored books on human development and human relations and has contributed many articles on various aspects of early childhood education.

SAMUEL J. MEISELS

Associate Professor and Chairman, Special Education Program,
School of Education, and Program Director for Special
Education, Institute for the Study of Mental Retardation
and Related Disabilities
University of Michigan

Dr. Meisels has been an important contributor to the pro-

fessional literature on preschool mainstreaming and screening and is a forceful spokesman for a developmental approach to the education of exceptional children. Formerly at Tufts University, he is the past director of the Eliot-Pearson Children's School and of LINC Outreach, a federally funded program to train teachers to integrate handicapped students into regular classrooms. Dr. Meisels is currently at work on issues relating to infant development and assessment and to screening of high risk infants.

MAYNARD C. REYNOLDS

Professor, Department of Psychoeducational Studies
University of Minnesota
Director, National Support Systems Project

Dr. Reynolds has been a national leader in the field of special education for two decades. He is perhaps best known for his contribution as an architect of the movement to integrate handicapped students into regular classrooms. He has written extensively on many important topics in special education including teacher education and mainstreaming. In addition, as director of the National Leadership Training Institute, Dr. Reynolds has been responsible for generating and disseminating important knowledge about the education of handicapped students.

HENRY RICCUITI

Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies
College of Human Ecology, Cornell University

Dr. Riccuiti is currently involved in teaching and research related to cognitive and emotional development in infancy and is the director of the Infant Care and Resource Center of Cornell University. In his distinguished career as a scientist, Dr. Riccuiti has authored and edited important chapters, books, and articles on the effects of early experience and intervention on development. He also has directed the Cornell Research Program in Early Development and Education for the past seven years and consults frequently with the department of Health, Education and Welfare of the federal government.

ROSALYN RUBIN

Associate Professor
Department of Psychoeducational Studies
University of Minnesota

Since 1971 Dr. Rubin has conducted a major research project on the educational and behavioral consequences of prenatal and perinatal conditions. Part of the National Collaborative Perinatal Project, Dr. Rubin's research has yielded important information about our ability to predict child behavior. Widely honored, Dr. Rubin has authored numerous chapters and articles and is a frequent consultant to school districts as well as to state and federal government.

DONALD STEDMAN

Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs
and Professor of Education
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Dr. Stedman has long been and continues to be a major contributor to the scientific study of mental retardation, infant development and education, and early intervention for handicapped and high risk young children. As an administrator of a large university system, he is heavily involved in major policy issues such as the delivery of pre-service and in-service teacher training. He also frequently consults with federal and state governments on issues relating to young children and their education.

JOSEPH STEVENS

Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education
Georgia State University

Dr. Stevens has authored and edited several books, chapters and articles on various aspects of early education and development, including early childhood program administration and the parenting role of father. He is currently investigating the effects on parenting of contact with social networks. Dr. Stevens is also the research editor of the journal, Young Children.

Introduction

This book is based on interviews with experts in the fields of early education and development who came to Minneapolis between April and August, 1979 as faculty of CEED's Professional Growth Institutes (PGIs). Each of these experts agreed to participate in an hour-long interview, the content of which forms the basis of this book.

In keeping with one of CEED's goals -- to make available to a general audience the latest and most accurate knowledge about early education and development -- my intention is to present current thinking about theory, practice, policy, and research in a relevant and interesting manner. The conversational format of the interviews allows readers access to current information "straight from the expert's mouth," in the form of "plain talk" largely devoid of technical jargon or excessive detail about research methodology and design. While the final product is not in the question and answer style of, let's say, a People magazine interview, the expert opinions are expressed in conversational language, and the research evidence and scholarly speculation are punctuated with anecdotes and personal examples that make for interesting reading. Also, especially in chapters where much difference of opinion is expressed, there is a debate-like quality that conveys the spectrum and at times the intensity of strongly held views.

The interviews were conducted using a standard format of four broad questions that were formulated by a CEED committee. We hoped by asking each of the PGI faculty the same set of questions to get a sample of the issues, questions, problems, and solutions we face as we enter the 1980s. The faculty were asked to keep a general audience in mind when addressing these questions:

1) What are the most important questions or issues in your area that would be of interest to a general audience?

2) In your view, what is the impact that recent public policy decisions, laws, movements, etc., have had on programs for young children and their families? How about the impact on your own work?

3) In what ways do you see research in your field having implications for direct application?

4) What do you see as future directions in your field? How do they relate to early child development and/or education?

In some cases the respondents fluently and fascinatingly "held forth" on each of these questions for 15 minutes as the interviewers (fellow graduate students and myself) simply nodded and approved. In other cases we probed, questioned, asked that gaps be filled in and that interesting points be elaborated, much in the manner of Barbara Walters, if not of Edward R. Murrow. The result is that points of view are expressed here which have not been expressed elsewhere in print. The faculty often felt inclined to venture opinions and to offer insights that they had not yet tested in the more treacherous waters of the professional literature.

The overlap of topics across the four questions was extensive; for example, educational mainstreaming of handicapped preschoolers was seen as a major issue in discussions of public policy, research, and future directions. Topics such as screening, mainstreaming, teacher education, and parenting generated so much discussion that they seemed to merit chapters of their own. For these reasons, the present topical organization was selected. Each chapter integrates the discussions of several PGI faculty around a common theme or themes.

The first two chapters of this book deal with issues pertaining to serving young children with special needs. In Chapter 1, technical and ethical problems in early identification of actually and potentially handicapping conditions are discussed. Mass developmental screening, at present the principal means of early identification, is examined critically, and alternatives to screening are suggested. The controversial topic of mainstreaming handicapped young children is the focus of Chapter 2, where

the meaning of mainstreaming and its current and potential impact are vigorously debated.

The next two chapters focus on the education and development of important adults in the lives of children -- parents and teachers. In Chapter 3 interesting questions are raised about how people are "socialized" into parenthood, and the appropriate content and structure of parent education programs are considered. Chapter 4 deals with major issues in teacher education and certification, including identification of the requisite skills for effective teaching, certification of child care workers, and the problem of delivering in-service training. A central theme in both chapters is the challenge, given this country's immense cultural diversity, of educating parents and teachers in value laden areas such as child-rearing and facilitating emotional development.

The last three chapters are based largely on the PGI faculty's responses to questions pertaining to the application of research and to policy issues. The various contexts and ways in which research affects the lives of young children are considered in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 has two foci: the perils of misinterpreting or overinterpreting empirical findings, and the challenges inherent in accumulating knowledge about children as they develop within the interacting contexts of home, school, neighborhood, etc.. Finally, in Chapter 7 the discussion centers on these important issues of public policy: public vs. private delivery of preschool education, federal support of day care, and the justification of continued federal support for early childhood education.

This book is going to press almost two years after the interviews were conducted, and the reader may wonder how current the ideas and opinions expressed in these pages are. To insure that we were not publishing "old stories," copies of the manuscript were recently sent to the PGI faculty, and they were asked to edit and update their material. Their updated manuscripts lent assurance that this publication is timely. In fact, their comments suggested that the issues discussed in this volume may be timely for several years to come.

However, as this book goes to press, changes in socio-economic conditions and the political climate could dramatically

alter the face of education and the social services. While several of the faculty discussed financial problems and pressures affecting early care and education and the implications of increasingly tight economic times, it is fair to say that no one foresaw the enormous budgetary cuts in services for young children included in the "Reagan Budget." Nor did anyone suspect that the repeal of P.L. 94-142 for economic reasons would be discussed as early as spring, 1981. How dramatic cuts in funding or repeal of legislative mandates will alter screening practices, mainstreaming, or parent involvement is impossible to predict. Equally difficult to predict are the effects of increasingly limited funding for "basic" as well as "applied" research and for the training of personnel in the early childhood-related professions. As we carry on, though, in our uncertain efforts to provide high quality services for young children, conversation with highly knowledgeable colleagues can be an enormous help. I think this book will provide a bit of such conversation for you.

William R. Stixrud
Minneapolis, 1981.

1

Screening and Early Identification

Chapter One

SCREENING AND EARLY IDENTIFICATION

The topic of the first Professional Growth Institute was mainstreaming in early education. The faculty (Reynolds, Rubin, Stedman, Meisels) addressed issues ranging from the ethical rationale for mainstreaming to the funding systems related to services for handicapped children. Although much of the discussion in our interviews focused on educating handicapped children in the mainstream, the problems of locating and identifying young children with special needs were also seen as crucial. Donald Stedman stated the central question, which was discussed in depth by Rosalyn Rubin and Maynard Reynolds:

> From a service program point of view, I think one of the fundamental questions is how best to locate children who need educational services and to bring them into a systematic educational program with the least amount of disruption to the families and the most amount of benefit to the kids.

SCREENING UNDER FIRE

Many states have implemented mass developmental screening programs for children of preschool age in their efforts to identify children in need of special services. The screening approach appears to be grounded in common sense logic: if early intervention can ameliorate current problems and prevent (or lessen the severity of) later ones, then children should be identified and served as early as possible. Furthermore, it is likely that some children with special needs "fall through the cracks" between the more informal referral systems (e.g., family, pediatrician, nursery school or day care teacher) and are not identified until they reach school age.

Critics of mass developmental screening (including Rubin and Reynolds), however, point to the host of technical, ethical, and budgetary problems that plague screening programs. In our conversations, Rubin and Reynolds challenged various aspects of the logic of preschool screening and discussed alternative approaches to identifying children with special needs. We will consider first their critiques of early screening and then the alternatives.

Reynolds outlined ethical concerns about labeling young children as well as the technical problems that make it difficult to identify individual children in need of special services:

> One way of thinking about identifying children with special needs is to imagine that we have to identify specific children and that we have to classify them as mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, partially sighted and so on. It's not easy to do that, especially with very young children, except in the case of the severely handicapped. We have doubts about the reliability of assessment and prediction with young children, and we're not quite sure that the classification and labeling is appropriate. We're fearful that labeling children might do them a disservice by creating an indelible stamp of "handicapped" which may lead to negative or limited expectations on the part of parents, teachers, and others.

Rubin also expressed this ethical concern and further elaborated on the technical problems of assessment and prediction mentioned by Reynolds. The problem of predicting later school difficulties from early behavior or characteristics has been the topic of the research of Rubin and her colleagues over the past decade. As she emphasized, our ability (or inability) to identify immediate and potential problems is a very serious matter because the current thrust is towards the earliest possible identification of children who have or who are going to have various kinds of developmental problems. This matter is especially serious because, as Stedman pointed out, misidentification of young children can be so disruptive to families.

Results from Rubin's research have led her to hold strong reservations about our ability to identify young children with special needs accurately. She identified several questionable

assumptions that underlie mass screening efforts and need to be carefully examined. Let us explore these assumptions and their implications for screening.

Assumption Number 1:
We are able to identify at an early age problems that will become more severe at a later age if we do not intervene.

At the heart of this assumption is faith in the constancy of behavior of young children, a faith which Rubin suggests may be ill-founded:

> We've tended to assume that if a child displays some kind of behavior problem (perhaps hyperactivity at age three or four) that this is going to be a continuing problem for this child unless some kind of intervention is brought into play that will remedy it or change the course of the child's development. In other words, in the absence of some sort of external intervention the behavior that you see in the young child is just going to continue on in its path. This is similar to the long held belief in the total constancy of the IQ. We've learned that very early measures of infant intellectual development bear little relationship to adult or even later childhood IQ. So, there is not constancy in a simple minded way between the measure taken early on and what you see in the same individual at a later date. There may be a relationship, but it's not as obvious as we once thought.

Evidence from Rubin's research supports her contention that later problems are often not easily predicted from early behavior or characteristics. In her study, researchers were unable to accurately predict school achievement problems at age eight for children who scored in the lowest 25% on school readiness tests at ages four and five. The accuracy of prediction was no better than chance (or similar to that which would occur by flipping a coin, the two sides of which were "later problems" and "no later problems"). Prediction was more accurate for children who scored high on school readiness tests (they rarely had later school problems). But, in Rubin's words, "If they are having some problems, it's a 50/50 proposition as to whether or not they're going to have them later on." She went on to add:

> I'm talking now about children ages four and five and predicting to age eight. When you move to an earlier age and try to pick up children with potential problems at ages one, two and three years, I think the error rate in prediction for individual cases will dramatically increase.

In other words, the longer the time between the screening measure and a later "outcome" measure (e.g., school achievement) the less accurate are the predictions one is able to make about a child's future behavior.

What further complicates the prediction of behavioral constancy, according to Rubin, is that sometimes we are not even attempting to predict that the same behavior (or behavioral problem) will continue. Rather, on the basis of one behavior (e.g., a small motor problem in a three-year-old), we predict that the child will have another kind of problem (e.g., in reading) when s/he goes to school. This aspect of prediction is also fraught with problems.

If the assumption of behavioral constancy does not hold as generally as we once supposed, what are the implications for screening programs? If early problems are not <u>necessarily</u> predictive of later ones, can we justify identifying, labeling, and placing a child in special education on the basis of our less-than-accurate predictions? In answer to this question Rubin suggested that a basic differentiation must be made in the screening of preschool age children for various handicaps or problems:

> The distinction is between the identification of problems that children <u>already</u> have -- the real problems that need to be addressed in their lives at this moment -- and predicting, on the basis of current behavior, future problems which they <u>may</u> have. For example, a child may have a severe sensory impairment, e.g., a vision or hearing problem which is going to impede his/her development; obviously with a severe hearing problem, the child's language development is going to fall behind and s/he will need some kind of intervention as soon as the problem is identified. This

problem exists, and the evidence shows that the more we can do for the child at an early age the better his/her language development will be later on. There's a real difference between this and identifying certain kinds of deviant behavior (deviant in terms of not following the age norms for certain kinds of development) and therefore predicting that later on the child is going to have a problem. Let's go back to motor coordination, for example. Children at age three and four may not be well coordinated in playing games with their peers, but it's not a real problem in their lives. What we tend to see as the real problem is the implication that the poor coordination might create problems in learning later on. Again, there's a real difference between identifying an existing problem and moving to remediate it as best we can, and identifying some kind of sign which may indicate that later on there's going to be a problem and therefore deciding we'd better move in quickly before the problem has a chance to develop.

Assumption Number 2:
Everyone agrees about what constitutes a problem.

As Rubin's work has very dramatically shown, this is not necessarily so. What appears to be a problem to one parent or teacher (or screener) may not be perceived as a problem by someone else. Rubin has reported the astonishing results of her research which document that children need not be terribly deviant from the norm to be seen by teachers as "problem" children:

> We have found, for example, that as children go through the elementary grades, teachers vary widely in what they identify as behavior problems in the classroom. They vary to such an extent that the odds are slightly better than 50-50 that any child going through elementary school from kindergarten through sixth grade will have at least one teacher who will say that that child is showing a behavior problem in the classroom. And if they're boys the odds become two to one: for about 66% of the boys at least one teacher will say that the child is showing a behavior problem.

Rubin then traced the (logically absurd) implications of this finding:

> Obviously, if you want to predict at the preschool level which children are going to be behavior problems in school and then institute some kind of preventive program, you'd better put all the boys in the program right away. If you accept that a problem is what any one teacher out of seven is willing to call a problem, then perhaps you'd also better put all the girls in the program too. Now, problem behavior presumably is behavior which is deviant; but if the majority of children are showing problem behavior then obviously this is not deviant behavior. This is normative behavior. So then how are we defining a problem? And if there's this much disparity amongst observers when the children are actually in the classroom, how accurate do we think we can be at predicting what they're going to be like before they ever get there?

Assumption Number 3:
Whatever problems children show when they reach school years are problems inherent in the child.

In taking exception to this assumption, Rubin emphasized the crucial role of environmental factors in determining whether a child will have problems in school:

> No matter how closely we observe a child and how accurately we can assess his strengths and weaknesses, we cannot be sure that the characteristics of the child will be regarded as a problem until we see how that child interacts with a given environment. For example, given a child with poor auditory learning skill, you cannot tell whether or not he or she will be able to learn to read satisfactorily in the first grade unless you know what the reading program is going to be like in that first grade classroom. It depends on whether or not the system for reading instruction in that particular classroom is going to hit the child's strengths or weaknesses, and only when you know that will you know

whether or not the child will have a "problem" in learning to read.

Assumption Number 4:
Once we've identified a problem we know how to intervene.

Rubin suggested that our ability to intervene successfully was greater for children with some problems (e.g., vision or hearing impairment) than with others:

> We are far more advanced in knowing what to do with children who have serious problems here and now than we are at knowing what to do with the softer signs of later problems. We ought to learn from the field of speech therapy that some problems of young children eventually go away on their own and admit that we don't know enough about development to be absolutely certain which children are going to have continuing problems and which are not.
>
> For years, speech therapists in the elementary schools throughout the country screened incoming kindergartners for articulation problems and then instituted programs in the school for so many minutes or hours per day or per week (over the course of the early primary years) to help the children overcome their articulation problems. The therapists then pointed with pride to the fact that by the time the children reached the third grade they had cured 95% of these articulation problems. However, someone eventually did a controlled study and found out that for children who had not had any kind of intervention program, maturation took care of 95% of the articulation problems by the time they reached third grade.
>
> I would hate to see us have all kinds of preschool programs instituted to cure children of developmental problems that would disappear on their own. If children enter a program at age four with certain kinds of coordination problems and by age five they're cured of those coordination problems, and we discover that 90% of those problems go away at the end of one year anyway, it would be a terrible waste. I'm concerned not only about

wasted resources, but also about what happens when we identify children as having problems and label them as such. What does it do to parents and to the children themselves when it is suggested that they need a special program?

ALTERNATIVES TO SCREENING

The "At Risk" Approach

Given our limited ability to identify accurately individual children who have problems that require intervention, it is not surprising that approaches have been suggested which do not involve screening individual children and then serving those who fail the screening (and a later, more in-depth individual assessment). Maynard Reynolds, along with many others, has proposed a "children at risk" approach to early identification and intervention. Rather than attempting to identify specific children, the "at risk" approach aims at identifying populations (or sub-populations) of children who have a high likelihood of developing learning and/or behavior problems without intervention. Under this system, health and educational services would be offered to these children as early as possible, without bothering to classify each child as mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, etc. Justification of this approach would be based on a statistical demonstration that the incidence of learning and behavior problems in a group that has been given services is less than it probably would have been without early intervention. Reynolds summarized this approach:

> What I'm suggesting is that instead of labeling the children as falling into some category, we could just identify a set of children about whom one could say there's high risk or a pretty high probability that there will be difficulties in the future, and then plan interventions on that basis. Initial observation of these children by psychologists and teachers would focus on their responses to the beginning phases of an instructional program. The instructional situation itself would then be used to help construct the program that might be helpful to these children.

> These interventions would be justified on a kind of statistical base which indicates that once you've intervened, the incidence of learning disabilities, defined in a particular way, tends to go down, and that a higher proportion of the children than might otherwise have been the case seem to progress well or normally.

It should be mentioned at this point that this "high risk" alternative does not imply that young children with special needs who are not part of a high risk population would not receive services. However, because in this approach the emphasis is not on screening every child in the community, reliance would be greater on the operation of the informal referral systems mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. This reliance would seem to be well-founded, as research evidence suggests that the more seriously disabled infants and young children are indeed identified though these informal channels. At the same time, the less seriously involved children are those for whom accurate assessment and prediction are most difficult, thus rendering attempts to screen for these children less justifiable.

Funding Alternatives

Reynolds cautioned, however, that adopting this alternative approach will be difficult:

> So many of our public policy and funding mechanisms are tied in with labeling and classification systems which are of questionable usefulness at the preschool level. Labeling currently pays off in services because local agencies often provide services only when children have been assigned to one of these categories.

Reynolds explained that this categorization is done because the state and federal special education programs make payments to the local school system for every child who has been classified mentally retarded, hearing impaired, etc. The payoff for the school districts quite clearly comes from identifying and labeling individual children: the more youngsters they label, the more money they get.

Reynolds suggested three funding systems as alternatives. These systems differ from the child-by-child approach in that

they provide money to schools to support special services based on some other unit than the individual child in a disability category Because alternative approaches to identifying handicapped children are very much linked to alternative funding, consideration of these systems is worthwhile.

In the first system, the unit of payment to schools would be shifted from the individual child to a "programmatic unit," such as a special resource unit. For example, in California, a school district receives $22,000 per resource unit, which includes a specially trained teacher and a school room stocked with supplies. The school justifies this unit by demonstrating a high incidence of learning problems, which it wishes to lower. In this way money is not being tied directly to a specific number of children who have been labeled.

A second approach is to make payments for a "smaller" level of service, that is, so much per hour of psychological diagnosis or individual tutoring. Although, as Reynolds suggested, this complex system may require computerized operation, it is still workable and preferable to child-by-child funding.

The third alternative, which is Reynolds' favorite -- paying off on a personnel unit (e.g., so much per professional, paraprofessional, or secretary) -- has worked in Minnesota for several years. Personnel units are justified by local agencies on the basis of needs assessment and broad plans for services:

> In my view the major and the most stable cost element no matter what you do is personnel. It's quite simple and it draws attention to the element that is also most essential for quality improvement. I really worry these days about administrators who so often get drawn to trivia -- keeping track of all sorts of details and things that don't matter too much and filing all kinds of reports. If the basic unit that administrators dealt with was personnel, their attention would be drawn to the real and appropriate focus for improvement of quality education. Also, payoff on a personnel unit provides for programmatic traceability and accountability. Accountability makes sense only when you trace it to people that you hold accountable. And it is

very difficult to trace accountability to people in any other system.

> We need to work on these funding systems, but change is not easy to accomplish. The world is full of people who think that the way to serve handicapped children is to start by getting them into categories and then link the money to them.

In summary, Reynolds advocated an approach to identifying and serving children with special needs and a funding system that would not depend on children being placed in disability categories. As long as our funding systems support the labeling and classification of individual children, he argued, we will likely continue in the often inaccurate and inefficient practice of mass screening.

A Focus On Service

Like Reynolds, Rubin argued that our focus should not be so much on screening children as on providing and improving educational services. She felt that, even if it were possible to identify children "at risk" for developmental problems, our emphasis and our energies should be devoted to developing school programs that are sensitive to individual needs. In her opinion our first priority should be to make a wide range of alternative experiences available in our schools. I'm talking not about just a couple of different ways of teaching reading, but about a really broad range of classroom environments. Those which are traditional and which require certain kinds of behaviors are really appropriate for some children who need a great deal of structure in the classroom, whereas for others they're terribly binding, and lead to what we call behavior problems. Some children need a more open type of school with less structure to feel comfortable. You can't then just decide to have an open school and think that's going to solve everybody's problem. It will create problems for some kids in the same way a traditional one will. I would argue that schools ought to provide as wide a range of options as possible and then do their best to try to match children who have certain kinds of characteristics with the optimal environment for them.

Rubin, then, is warning about the difficulty in predicting at preschool age which children will have problems in school and suggesting that a school with several choices of classroom environment may be able to prevent many school learning problems.

While Reynolds' emphasis in the interview was on providing services to high risk populations as early as possible and Rubin's was on making the later school environments more flexible, these are clearly not mutually exclusive. Rather, they reflect common concerns with differences only in focus. Both views are consistent with the notion that efforts and resources should be spent in serving young children with special needs in ways that render costly mass developmental screening unnecessary.

Chapter Two

MAINSTREAMING

Every researcher we interviewed cited Public Law 94-142, the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act" of 1975, as having a huge impact on early childhood education. Various aspects of P.L. 94-142 -- the mandate to educate younger and younger handicapped children, the provision for individualized instruction of children with special needs, the requirement that parents participate in making decisions about their child's educational placement and programs -- profoundly influence the configurations of children, parents, and school personnel that make up early childhood education.

Perhaps the best known and potentially most influential provision of this law is for the education of handicapped children in "the least restrictive environment," which is usually translated as education in the most normal environment possible. For many children, the most normal environment is the regular, or mainstream, classroom. Mainstreaming, the topic of the first 1980 Professional Growth Institute, was also a major topic of discussion in the interviews with faculty from the other institutes. The PGI faculty addressed such questions as what is mainstreaming, who should be mainstreamed and who should not, when is the best time to integrate handicapped and nonhandicapped children, what can be done to facilitate the mainstreaming process, and how might mainstreaming change the face of the regular classroom? Other provisions of P.L. 94-142, mentioned above, were also discussed and will be considered here as they relate to the main thread of our discussion, early education in the mainstream.

CONTROVERSY OVER MAINSTREAMING

Although the integration of handicapped and nonhandicapped children is publicly supported by P.L. 94-142, mainstreaming has been (and remains) the object of much controversy. Supporters of mainstreaming have attempted to justify it on ethical, judicial-legal, educational, and psychological grounds. In our conversation Samuel Meisels, an advocate of integrating handicapped preschool children with nonhandicapped children, referred to the "moral imperative" explicit in mainstreaming for "reducing isolation and prejudice." Arguments in support of mainstreaming often emphasize the rights of the handicapped to equal opportunity and the benefits to handicapped children that accrue from interacting with nonhandicapped peers. Mary Lane went farther and emphasized the potential benefits for all children and for society as a whole:

> I think we always need to keep in mind that it's not just the special needs children that are benefitting from this -- the other children benefit just as much. If we could rear a generation of people who would not turn their heads when they meet somebody on the street who looks a little different from themselves or who walks in a particular kind of gait, I think it would be a great humanitarian step ahead. I would like to see mainstreaming really be thought about in terms of developing an attitude within the teachers and thereby within the children -- of a general acceptance of people who have special needs.

Despite the potential benefit for individual children, families, and society, mainstreaming efforts have been frequently criticized and resented. This criticism and resentment were captured in a report given by CBS TV's Sixty Minutes, which explored the difficulties encountered by the state of Michigan in implementing the least restrictive environment requirement. Meisels, who discussed at length his reaction to the Sixty Minutes treatment of mainstreaming, argued that the show was biased in emphasizing the frustration of the teachers involved, the fear and anger of the parents of both handicapped and nonhandicapped children, and the pressure on the children caught in the middle.

While he felt the presentation was one-sided, Meisels agreed that mainstreaming is genuinely of great concern to parents; he

pointed out that by its very nature mainstreaming involves all children in school and thus the parents of all children in school. When handicapped children are educated in the regular classroom, they are highly visible, and the considerable cost in serving special needs children in the mainstream (in the form of special equipment, aides, specialized professional services, and transportation) is also highly visible. He pointed out that in economically difficult times the cost of serving children with special needs becomes a topic of public concern:

> I think certainly that people worry about the economic implications of early intervention as they worry about the implications of all federal laws. Programs to create services to handicapped kids cost a lot of money, and the general public wants to know why it is necessary. Why should we do it for children who are handicapped and not for the children who are not? What implications will it have for our children who are in school with these handicapped youngsters?

Mainstreaming Misunderstood

Public concern about mainstreaming is also rooted, according to Meisels and Rosalyn Rubin, in a general misunderstanding of who will be served in the regular classroom and who will not. Meisels, commenting on the mainstreaming segment of Sixty Minutes, explained this misunderstanding:

> The show was misleading because it made the mistake that so many people make of equating the least restrictive alternative with mainstreaming. They didn't make it clear that the least restrictive alternative for some children is the most structured, restricted, segregated classroom you can imagine, and that that might be the best place you can find for them. They also did not describe any of the variations of mainstreaming that exist other than full regular class placement.

The variations of mainstreaming that Meisels referred to may be thought of as a continuum of service options that constitute the range of least restrictive environments. These options include full day placement in the regular classroom without support help (complete mainstreaming), individual tutoring or

therapy provided within the regular classroom, and part-day placement in a special resource room. Rubin also attempted to clarify this expanded notion of least restrictive placement:

> I think that there are a number of misconceptions about P.L. 94-142, which provides that children should be placed in the least restrictive environment optimal for their educational growth and development. People tend to forget the second half of it and just say "the least restrictive alternative," implying that everybody comes out of custodial care into the regular classroom because the regular classroom is the least restrictive alternative. The least restrictive alternative for the optimal development of some children may not be a traditional classroom setting.

While a portion of our conversations was aimed at clarifying what mainstreaming is not, much discussion focused on what it is and what it should be. Mainstreaming has been variously conceived of as an attitude (c.f. Mary Lane's statement above), as social policy (c.f. Meisels above), as an educational philosophy, and as a legal mandate. Maynard Reynolds, a leader of the mainstreaming movement, emphasized the "service delivery system" aspect of mainstreaming in explaining his interpretation of the least restrictive environment as expressed in public law:

> One of the things that the policy makers are saying through this legislation is that the best possibilities for most children remain within their own families and their natural communities. They want to see developments in the "mainstream." They don't use that word, but they say that the specialists should offer their services to families and to teachers in a way which least interferes with the lives of the children; in effect they say to specialists, "don't hastily take the kids off to institutions or special schools." Rather, deliver your support services to the families and to regular teachers in regular schools. And I think the policies envision a highly decentralized system in which children are left where they are, not collected by simple category (e.g., mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, and so on). There's a basic and important kind of message here for families and for children,

which can be discussed in terms of decentralization of specialists. It involves employing the specialist not just to run a special place for deaf kids, but to work with the mother of the deaf child, and to work with the regular teacher of that child, and to make sure that communication is more effective with the pediatrician.

When Should Mainstreaming Begin?

Reynolds' statement also reminds us that, at least for infants and young children, the least restrictive environment can often be the home. When that is the case special services should be delivered there to infants and young children either directly or through the parents.

While the law may support the position that the best possibilities for children with special needs lie within the mainstream, in many states (if not most), preschool age children receive these specialized services in self-contained special education classrooms. Children in these preschools are, in fact, often grouped by their disability category. This system of service delivery runs counter not only to the "least restrictive environment" mandate of PL 94-142 but to the belief held by many early childhood educators that preschool age is the optimal time for integrating handicapped children into regular educational programs. This belief is based in part on the supposition that young children may be less prejudiced towards and more accepting of others who are in some way(s) different than are older children. Reynolds spoke to the issue of how best to provide specialized services to children who need them and yet still reap the benefits of early social integration:

> There's a lot of disagreement. Some people feel that we should take handicapped children in the very early years and give them very intensive and extensive specialized training and then later on integrate them. I think a good many people involved in the education of the deaf have felt this way -- that is, give them saturation programs and special methods that might be helpful to them in language development and then gradually prepare them to enter a more integrated community.

The other side of the issue is that social integration may be best if begun early. I think we need to be open and to study that matter and to use our heads all the way. Some children do need very intensive specialized help and it may be quite important early on in life, but it's also true that we can give an awful lot of that by working in the mainstream, by working in the child's own family with the parents, and by working in the community schools as well. I tend to believe that we should start by integrating children as fully as possible as early as possible and sticking with that. At the same time, in the case of blind children, you'd want to make sure that there's early, specific training in the beginning phases of mobility and orientation. Likewise, you'd want to make sure that the parents and others who work with the deaf child have assets that would help them in facilitating the child's language development. I think that this is possible, and I really believe that when you get to the parents and some of the generic caregivers in the community, you've gotten to the people who will take the long hours to interact with the children. We're not going to have enough specialists to do that total job over the many hours of the child's day. So I'm in favor of integrating the children as early as possible and trying to deliver the intensive services they need within that context.

Reynolds' point of view may be summarized as: "Serve as many children as possible as early as possible in the mainstream." This view implies that the regular classroom is the optimal placement for all children who can be educated there.

Alternatives To The Mainstream

Rubin expressed the strongest objection to Reynolds' emphasis on the "complete as possible" decentralization of service. She went beyond suggesting that the regular classroom may not be the least restrictive alternative for the most severely handicapped children; she argued that, given the limited ability of most regular classroom environments to respond to individual needs, the regular classroom should not necessarily be considered the

most desirable environment even for those students capable of being maintained there:

> The assumption that people make, which really lies behind this legislation, is that the regular classroom is the most marvelous place to be. But I look at all of the concern that is expressed by the public and by many professionals over problems that exist in our regular education programs for children who are not handicapped in any sense of the word. There are concerns about our regular education programs at every level -- elementary, secondary, and higher education as well. So why, in the face of all this, the regular classroom is assumed to be the best place for children who have various kinds of handicaps or disabilities is something I don't quite understand. I understand the concern about socialization and of not being different. On the other hand, there's nothing magical about being placed in the regular classroom; if one's needs are not being met in that classroom it could be highly detrimental.

Rubin indicated that her remarks were directed toward regular kindergarten and primary grade classrooms, and she agreed that the "regular" preschool or day care classroom, with its lower teacher/child ratio, may be more able to accommodate individual differences than the primary classroom with 30 children and one teacher. At the same time, it is likely that children in special education preschools feel less social stigma or ostracism than might older children in segregated classes (all handicapped children), partly because of the more limited range of the preschooler's social comparisons. For Rubin, then, the question applies even to preschoolers: "In which environment will a specific child function best?" Rubin underscored the wide range of individual differences even among children with the same handicapped condition and affirmed that what may be the optimal environment for one mildly mentally retarded child, for example, may not be optimal for another:

> I think that we get too simplistic and believe that judgments can be made about the total needs of a child on the basis of their very specific, limited, educational needs. We tend to say that if a child has special learning needs, therefore, the <u>whole child</u> will be

better off placed in the regular classroom or in the segregated classroom. We forget the vast range of individual differences and personalities and general needs of children who may have exactly the same kind of cognitive deficit or exactly the same kind of learning disability. Some people, with or without problems, are more comfortable and are happier being a large fish in a small pond: being at the top of a special class for kids with problems may be far more rewarding for a specific kid than being at the bottom of a regular classroom. And yet somebody else, being the top in a special classroom may still feel different, and he'd rather be a part of the regular classroom even if he has to be at the bottom. There's no way to make these judgments on the basis of IQ and achievement test scores and to assume that one's going to be more comfortable in one place than another.

Perhaps Rubin's strongest challenge to the wisdom of the widest possible mainstreaming of handicapped children was her argument that residential institutions (where handicapped people live full time) and special segregated classes are not necessarily bad environments for children. Historically, one of the strongest arguments in support of mainstreaming has been that many children educated in these environments have suffered intellectually, academically, and, especially, emotionally and socially. Rubin contended, however, that the quality of institutional life, not merely the fact of institutionalization, must be considered in weighing the potential value of institutional placement for handicapped children:

If you look at the kinds of programs that some youngsters have been subjected to in residential institutions and even in some segregated classrooms, you would find that these children have had terrible experiences. However, we don't really know what the comparison would be if we had optimal institutions and optimal segregated classes versus some kind of optimal "mainstream". Then where would you place children who have special needs? The argument that existing residential programs or existing special classes are so poor that we need to remove the children theoretically falls by the wayside. Tactically, this may be what you have

to do immediately; but in the long run we need to look at developing the best programs we can in all these different kinds of stations. Might we not find that such a variety would better serve special needs children than trying to support all of them in the regular mainstream classroom?

CAN MAINSTREAMING WORK?

The Need For Support Services

Rubin's challenge to the notion that the regular classroom is the best place for children with special educational needs has at least a general ring of truth: the teacher in many (if not most) kindergarten and primary classrooms is already overburdened with too many chidren, too much paperwork, and too little time to spend in planning and meeting with parents. The added demands of handicapped children in the classroom can be a crushing blow, and so it has been too often. The proponents of the mainstreaming movement, however, never intended handicapped children to be "dumped" into the regular classroom without support for the teacher and the children (recall that Maynard Reynolds' interpretation of mainstreaming centered on the delivery of support services from specialists, e.g., psychologists or speech and language therapists). The necessity of appropriate support for mainstreaming and the frequent failure to provide it were common themes in our discussions. Mary Lane stated the problem this way:

> There is a danger of dumping special needs children into normal classrooms without giving the classroom teachers the support that they need to deal with the problems that are facing them, or without giving them any kind of special preparation. We have a tendency in education to mandate something and then rush into it. Often the teacher doesn't know when she comes to school in September what she is going to be faced with, nor has she had any preparation for it.

Sam Meisels expressed the same concern:

> No one seems to suggest the possibility that the reason teachers feel overwhelmed is that the school system or

the state department or the federal government is deficient in providing training and support for the teachers, the parents, and the children. It's that complex of supports that has to be in place before you can implement a program of this type. You can't expect that handicapped children can be placed in regular classes without support; regular classrooms then really become dumping grounds.

Steven Asher emphasized the importance of support in the form of teaching teachers new skills to facilitate successful integration:

> There seems to me to be a mis-match between the public policy decisions and the preparation of people for coping with them. I'm not very impressed by what I see happening in terms of teachers' ability to accommodate individual differences, and I'm concerned about what I see as the failure of school systems and the larger community to address the real problems that teachers are going to have. You put a very difficult child in a room without reducing the class size, for example, and it is difficult to expect that teacher to cope well with that situation. If you don't give teachers extra training in working with special needs children, in helping a peer group to be more accepting of a kid who is different, you're programming for failure. One could think of a variety of other things that you would want to teach teachers who are going to be working in mainstream classrooms.
>
> (See the chapter on teacher training for further discussion of this point.)

Effects Of Mainstreaming On The Mainstream

While some (like Rubin) question whether the regular classroom environment can successfully accommodate children with a wide range of educational needs, others maintain that mainstreaming, in conjunction with other provisions of P.L. 94-142 (especially individualized instruction and the involvement of parents), may revolutionize the regular classroom. As a result of the regular classroom serving a small number of handi-

capped children, it is hypothesized, teaching, planning for, and interacting with the parents of nonhandicapped children will change in a direction that is more responsive to individual differences. Reynolds has argued this possibility elsewhere, but Meisels stated it explicitly in our conversation when asked about the possible long range impact of mainstreaming:

> It is possible that as a result of mainstreaming, classrooms could be radically restructured, because it's impossible to successfully mainstream a broad range of handicapped kids into a classroom that's based on teaching "to the mean", or to the "average" child. You can't do it. Handicapped kids will fail in the program. The program will flounder because it cannot cope with discrepancy. One of the things we can do that's most helpful is to teach the teacher how to individualize instruction. To the extent that we introduce a more individualized approach to education in schools, we are engaged in radical restructuring of traditional education. As little as that is, it is radical.

Meisels, along with Robert Granger and Joseph Stevens, also pointed to the revolutionary potential for transforming the relations between school and the parents of all children which exists in the provision of P.L. 94-142 for the involvement of parents of handicapped children. Meisels emphasized the phenomenal impact that P.L. 94-142 is having on families and mentioned particularly the benefits accruing from the mandate of informed consent. "Informed consent" refers to the requirement that before a child can be placed in a program other than a regular classroom the school system must obtain the parents' written consent; the school personnel must explain the program and the possible alternatives that may exist in such a way that the parent understands. The requirement was contrasted with previous special class placement policy:

> This is much different from as recently as five years ago, when a child could receive an IQ test in school, be placed in a special class, and the parents would not even know about it until such time as they happened to wander into the school or the child mentioned it to them.

Meisels suggested that the requirement of informed consent will bring about a restructuring of the parent-school relationship and an improved information exchange. This could occur, he said, simply because parents and school personnel are required to meet person to person.

Granger described the way this face to face contact, especially in staffings (meetings of school staff and parents in which decisions are made about a child's program), is changing the way parents and teachers view each other:

> The involvement that parents have had in staffings has been a good thing for both teachers and parents. It helps teachers to see the parents of children that have special needs in a much more realistic and human context -- to see them as less the cause of that special need than was the general supposition. I think it also helps parents to get a better feel for the fact that many people really are concerned and are working hard to try to make appropriate decisions about their children. In short, I see the requirement of parent involvement in staffing and program planning as a vehicle for breaking down some of those stereotypic barriers between parents and teachers.

Stevens suggested hopefully that these changes may "spill over" or transfer to interaction with the parents of nonhandicapped children:

> The provisions of P.L. 94-142 have enabled parents of handicapped children to have considerable say about the nature of the curriculum or educational program that their kids receive. Those parents have more involvement in determining what kinds of interventions are planned for their kids and in assessing whether the educational goals are appropriate for their children. I suspect that this is going to spill over in terms of how teachers and school people relate to parents of nonhandicapped children as well. Teachers and school people are going to be more practiced at conducting IEP-type (individual educational plan) conferences; they're hopefully going to be more likely to do similar kinds of things with parents of nonhandicapped children.

The Pendulum May Swing

The prospect of a revolution in regular education triggered by the integration of a few handicapped students is admittedly optimistic, if not idealistic. The amount of skill, patience, persistence, and financial and technical support required to make this work is enormous. If we fall short in one or some of these areas, what then? Steven Asher confided his fear that unless a better job is done of preparing teachers for mainstreaming,

> 10 or 15 years from now we'll say, "That was disastrous," and we'll go back the other way -- kind of a faddish swing from one side to another. Maybe that won't happen -- maybe we'll be wiser this time around than we've been in the past.

This potential pendulum-like shift in our thinking about serving handicapped children would not be new. Donald Stedman described what he called a form of "backlash" from parents of older handicapped children in response to the pendulum swing represented by mainstreaming:

> Consider the parents of a handicapped child who have over a period of years worked through an extraordinarily difficult problem and found institutionalization or special class placement a great resolution to a lot of family problems and to the child's problem. Now someone comes in and disrupts that balance, in their view, by saying that the special class or institution is the worst place for their child. Some parents may be taking the line of least resistance and may not be doing as much for their kids as they might, but then they have in mind the total ecology of the family. It is understandable that they are perplexed, if not disturbed, about the fact that some external force has undone what they worked very hard to do.

The comments of Asher and Stedman heighten our awareness of the possibility that mainstreaming could fail. It is possible that we would want to reject mainstreaming as we have other educational innovations and return to delivering services to handi-

capped people in segregated settings. Meisels pointed out, however, that mainstreaming is unlike other educational innovations in one important respect: it has a legal-constitutional basis. Thus, in his words, "Unlike such innovations as team teaching and open education, mainstreaming can't easily be thrown out if it doesn't work."

To specify how we will know if mainstreaming does or does not "work" is in itself no easy task. Consider a few of the bases on which we may evaluate the effectiveness of integrating handicapped and nonhandicapped children: academic gains for handicapped children; increased acceptance by nonhandicapped children of those who are different in some way(s); improved self-concepts of handicapped children; the cost-effectiveness of delivering special services in the mainstream. Perhaps, even given poor results in all of these areas, mainstreaming will still be considered successful simply because it has been implemented -- that is, the dictate of the law will have been met.

It is, then, possible that research on the effectiveness of mainstreaming for children, families, teachers, and schools may not be put to use as evidence for accepting or rejecting it; it may be that Meisels is correct in suggesting that we will not have the choice of rejecting mainstreaming. Rather, research in the various areas mentioned will likely be used to maximize the possiblity that for most children the mainstream can indeed be the "most appropriate" as well as the "least restrictive" environment.

3

P
E

Chapter Three

PARENTING AND PARENT EDUCATION

In our conversations, several of the PGI faculty addressed issues related to parents and to the relationship between parents and educators. Because "parent involvement" in their children's education is discussed elsewhere in this volume (principally in Chapter 2), it will not be touched upon here. Rather, the focus of this chapter is on parenting variously considered as an area of research investigation, as a curriculum to be taught in our schools, and as a set of skills that develops over the course of a lifetime. These considerations were major topics in the interviews with Joseph Stevens and Frances Horowitz. In their discussion of parenting and parent education, Stevens and Horowitz addressed more specifically the following questions: How is a person "socialized" to become an effective parent; what is, in fact, an effective parent; what are the effects of certain parenting practices on an infant's development; how can we best help prospective parents to become good parents?

THE SOCIALIZATION OF PARENTING

Stevens and his colleagues are currently interested in learning more about the ecological or environmental factors that influence the quality of parenting. Ecological factors include such things as the physical environment, family and community, social services and schooling, shopping facilities, and day care options. Stevens wants to know how people become competent parents and what aspects of family and community life support (or inhibit) effective parenting. This knowledge, he feels, will enable professionals to do a better job of providing assistance and service to parents and prospective parents. Stevens pointed out that researchers from several disciplines are contributing to

our understanding of the relations between community support systems and parenting:

> There's a geographer, for instance, by the name of Chris Smith, who looks at an area in terms of the kinds of "natural neighbors" that exist. These are people who act as information referral resources for people in a particular community. They provide information if someone in that community needs to find out how to get day care, perhaps, or to find a good person to provide dental care for their child. In many communities there seem to be people who have developed a reputation for having certain kinds of competencies and certain kinds of knowledge to whom one can go to for assistance.

Stevens and his colleagues have included "natural neighbors" in the study of support systems and parenting. He told of a father who was interviewed in the course of a research project who described himself as a "natural neighbor" -- as a liaison between the community and the housing project in which he lives:

> One of the fathers in our study who we interviewed said, "I've been in this community for something like 15 years. I'm an important person in this community. I don't plan to leave here because I can do good here. If people need some help in terms of getting jobs, I know who to call downtown; if people downtown need some information about servies in a particular part of the community, they call me and I can help them".

The research question of particular interest to Stevens is whether the accessibility of natural neighbors and other sources of support in a community actually has an impact on the quality of parenting:

> We're looking at how a family's access to a social network, and/or to community resources correlates with their knowledge about child development, their skill in designing a home learning environment, and their infants' development. Based on some of our initial data, we're assuming that people who are more connected in certain ways probably are better able to design high quality home learning environments.

A second aspect of the socialization of parenting which Stevens suggested is important to investigate is the development of parenting skills -- how people become good parents. He suggested, once again, that until we understand how effective parents became effective we will be less able to facilitate the development of those preparing for parenthood. Specifically, we need to look at,

> parenting over the lifespan -- at how care-giving experiences and skills change from one period to another and how competence at one period is related to competence or skills at another period. That is, what kinds of caregiving skills, say in early childhood, relate to caregiving experiences in middle childhood, in adolescence, in young adulthood, middle age, and in old age.

Underlying this emphasis on development is an assumption:

> Parenting is not a behavior that begins at a certain period of time and ends when the children grow up and leave home. Rather, the skills that are involved are probably related to previous experiences. Parent education can be seen as a part of life-long learning. Adults seek such learning to continue to do a better job of being adults; parenting is simply a part of one's adult role, if you have chosen to have children. To some extent providing support to parents in working with their kids is a way of reinforcing the notion that education goes on, not just at school, but in various other settings as well.

A third aspect of socialization for parenting that needs to be studied is the child's role in shaping the parent. Stevens pointed out that we have talked for too long about parent-child relationships as if the parent influenced the development of the child but not vice-versa:

> There is now an increased awareness of the effect of the child on the parent's behavior, of the reciprocal kind of relationship between child and parent. The child's development is affected not only by what the parents do

to the child but is also affected by what the child does to the parents, and in turn by how the parents respond to the child. We need to look then, when we study how people become parents, at how their behavior is affected by their children.

Stevens summarized the nature of the knowledge we need to facilitate the development and support of good parents:

> We don't know how people become good parents. We need a lot more information about what events of early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence relate to being able to do an effective job in terms of rearing kids. We need to know what kinds of social supports relate to child rearing and what kinds of influence kids have on one's ability to be an effective parent.

WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD PARENTING?

Whereas Stevens discussed some of the factors that influence effective parenting, Frances Horowitz addressed the question of what constitutes good parenting. Her general focus was on our knowledge of the effects of early experience and on what we know (and don't know) about the "best things" to do for our children.

Mobiles And Crib Bumpers

As Horowitz pointed out, new parents quite understandably would like to know what effects their behavior and the environment may have on their baby's development. Decorating the baby's crib with attractive colored bumpers or hanging mobiles overhead are often undertaken in hopes of "stimulating" the baby's development. However, as Horowitz said, whether such things really make a difference is not yet known. There is evidence that fewer children with developmental problems come from homes in which parents tend to build these things into the baby's learning environment. But this is not evidence that mobiles, bumpers, special rattles etc., cause better outcomes for babies. Horowitz suggested an alternative explanation:

> It may be that the whole constellation of things that tend to go along with hanging mobiles and putting in attractive bumpers may constitute the important factors.

I'm speaking of parents being responsive to the needs of a child, parents having an adaptable repertoire of caretaking skills, parents being sensitive to individual differences and knowing how to calibrate their behavior accordingly.

One of the findings of the perinatal collaborative project is that the two highest correlates of developmental outcome are economic status and maternal education. Some set of variables is correlated with the mother's education that makes a difference for the child's development. Just completing more grades of school and going further in education has a generalized positive effect. But it may not be education itself that makes the difference, it could be things that are correlated with education. People who have more education tend to have more money, people with more education tend to have better medical care, people with more education tend to have better nutrition. Maybe these are the functional variables.

Our knowledge is relatively limited about these "functional variables," that is, variables that make a difference (e.g., sunlight and soil make a difference in plant growth, so the characteristics of the soil and the amount of sunlight are the functional variables for plants). Horowitz's advice to parents of infants is thus largely based on her own experience:

If a mother said to me "Should I hang a mobile in my baby's crib?" I wouldn't say no. We know that those things can't hurt; whether in fact they do anything that's useful or not, we really don't know. What would I tell a mother to do? I would tell her to do all the things I did, because I believe those are good things to do for children. And I would tell her all the things that tend to be associated with middle class cultures. On the other hand, we know there are a lot of children who come from low socio-economic status (SES), high risk families who do all right. Those families may or may not have done the things that middle class families do. There are a lot of questions unanswered about what makes a difference, and that's why it's so hard to answer the

layman's question, "What should I do that would be the best thing for my baby?"

Horowitz conceded that it is easier to speak with scientific certainty about some important prenatal functional variables. She specifically warned of the well-documented hazards of smoking and poor nutrition during pregnancy:

> We've become increasingly appreciative of the fact that the baby's status at birth is determined to a large extent by what happens in the nine months prior to birth. The one thing I would tell potential mothers is not to smoke. There is a clear correlation between maternal smoking and risk status in infants. (In fact, some people claim that maternal smoking correlates more highly with developmental risk status than does SES and that if you control for smoking the SES correlation wipes out.) The health habits of the mother including smoking, nutrition, and even nutrition prior to pregnancy seem to be very important variables. Given the junk diets of most teenage women in our culture, teen-age pregnancy becomes even more of a concern. Babies born to these young mothers are at very high risk in terms of poor developmental outcome. Also, alcohol consumed consistently and in more than just minimal quantities does have a negative effect on the developmental status of newborns, and a fetal alcohol syndrome has now been identified. But again, the consistent consumption of alcohol produces lots of side effects which can affect the nutritional status of the mothers. I don't know that you can sort those factors out.

PARENT EDUCATION

Horowitz and Stevens each recognized a current national push for parent education and discussed how best to educate prospective parents. While each advocated including child development and parenting practices in the junior and senior high curricula, both expressed some concerns and reservations. Stevens suggested that there is "clearly a need" for such programs in schools, but that we really do not know what the effects of these programs may be. Is it possible, for instance, that young people involved in these educational programs are less likely to become adolescent

parents or even to become parents? And how may these programs affect young people's ability to relate to and interact with children once they have them? These are questions which Stevens indicated must be addressed soon.

Cultural Diversity And Values

Horowitz and Stevens also expressed a fear of "indoctrinating" all students with middle class (or dominant cultural) values about parenting. Horowitz summarized the historical conditions that have necessitated some form of education for parenthood and hinted at the "values" problem:

> In our society the opportunities to observe models of parenting increasingly diminish when you're not living in extended families or in contact with extended generations. So nowadays people are coming into parenthood with very little practical experience, unaware of what it involves, and with very little information about what babies are like and how they develop. Some form of educational provision to meet that problem is necessary, and I have advocated that basic child development be part of high school curricula. However, there is a danger here if you believe it's important to protect the pluralistic nature of our society, because it's very hard for people to teach child development without also teaching values.

Stevens elaborated on the implications of cultural diversity for parenting education:

> One of the reasons that we have so many different kinds of parent education programs in this country is that there is no uniform, agreed-upon set of goals relating to how children are supposed to turn out. In a democratic society we must live with cultural complexity and diversity in determining what a good child or a competent child is supposed to be like. To some extent, in fact, that kind of complexity has to be fostered.

It is easy enough to say that cultural diversity should be respected and protected and that no cultural group should be allowed to foist its own values on another. During Horowitz's

presentation at the PGI, however, an incident occurred that exemplified the difficulty of both teaching about theoretically important aspects of effective parenting (e.g., warm physical contact between mother and child) and respecting the values of all cultural groups. Horowitz related the incident during our interview:

> One of the participants in the seminar, an American Indian woman, came up to me at the end of the afternoon and said that she hoped I would say something tomorrow relating to the fact that in her culture the parents never hug and kiss their children, and she thinks they turn out all right. I had talked about cuddling and how important it was, but what she was saying to me is, here's a culture that doesn't cuddle. And this (not cuddling) is something that is very functional for that culture. Yet, if she hadn't said that, I would have probably just gone on talking about tactile stimulation and its importance, even though I know better. That comes out of my culture. I love to hug my kids and I think it's a very pleasurable thing for parents and kids to do. But that's not a value for her culture. And unless I keep getting brought up short on these kinds of subcultural differences, I'll be putting my values in terms of child development onto other people. In a high school curriculum, when the preparation of the teacher is not going to be very extensive in this field, I think the danger is even greater, and I would worry. I'm not so worried that I'd say "don't do it" -- but I think it's something to be concerned about.

Further complicating the cultural values question is the nature of the knowledge about child development that serves as the basis for courses on parenting. Stevens described the limitations of this knowledge:

> Much of the information that we have about children's development is generated from studies done on middle class White subjects; there's not a lot of child development data on Black kids' development, especially social or personality development. The same is true for low income kids, Chicano kids, Native American children. When Diana Baumrind talks about styles of parenting she

makes the very appropriate point that her data are gathered on White middle-class subjects and that generalizations about these patterns of parenting should be limited to White middle-class subjects. However, many of us suggest that similar effects may occur from authoritarian styles of parenting or authoritative persons in minority families. I guess that a person working with potential parents has to present a healthy respect for research, for the limits of knowledge based on research, a willingness to utilize research information, and a willingness to clarify one's own values.

A Broad Range Of Services

Stevens' discussion of parent education extended beyond the classroom and ranged to the more general cultural problems involved in providing services (including education and training) to parents. Diversity was the main theme of his answer when we asked if good parent education programs currently exist:

> The question is, does the push for parent education imply that there's one curriculum or one correct way to be an effective parent? Does it mean that you develop one curriculum where adults learn one set of skills in interacting with children, for example, Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) or behavior modification techniques? Clearly this is not appropriate.
>
> I don't have any research data to support it (this is my own bias), but I suspect that a program for parents which is most likely to be effective is one that presents several alternatives, because there's no one right way to become a competent parent. Given the variance in family structure that exists in this country and the variety of people that parent successfully -- single fathers, single mothers and extended families that probably do a very effective job of rearing children - it's difficult to argue that one particular way of parenting is most effective.

For this reason, according to Stevens, a variety of services should comprise the community support systems for parents:

It's appropriate to provide a variety of support systems for parents: home visits; intensive kinds of support from particular individuals; group consultation for those parents that want to get together and discuss ways to interact with their kids or get information from one another; or drop-in centers where parents can go and talk to a lay counselor. There needs to be a variety of delivery systems that are planned to reflect the kind of services that parents in a particular community want or need. The content of what's delivered needs to be varied as well, in keeping with the particular kinds of problems and goals of parents. And these -- delivery system and the content -- need to be matched to the parent. The best way to do that may be to offer a variety of things and let the parents plug in to the kind of system that they feel is the most consonant with their needs, wants and values.

Offering a variety of services makes excellent sense. But often times facilitating parents' use of services is not easy. When asked whether a "cafeteria" approach will best ensure the successful use of services by parents, Stevens responded:

I don't mean that it should be <u>just</u> a responsive mode on the part of the people offering the services to parents. There has to be a more aggressive effort in seeking out parents, offering services, and enabling parents to hook up with the service that's most appropriate for them. We should not just set up neighborhood resource centers and wait for parents to come knocking on the door. We should provide something like those natural neighbors who will go out to parents in the community to find out what kind of services they need. If those services are not offered at the neighborhood resource center, then there would be a home visiting program operating in the community which some parents can be hooked up to; or there might be a P.E.T. program for those parents who want help interacting democratically with their kids; and there would be child abuse prevention programs. I'd like to see a network of parent education services within a community that is interconnected and yet that has some systematic way of contacting parents.

4

Chapter Four

TEACHER TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Much of the discussion in the interviews pertained to the training and credentialing of early childhood educators. Several faculty persons discussed their own involvement in teacher preparation as well as research with implications for the training of teachers. The faculty brought a wide range of experiences to bear on such questions as who should become a teacher of young children, what are the critical skills needed by an early childhood educator, how can teachers best be trained, and how can the professional growth of teachers already in the field be encouraged?

THE SOURCE OF TRAINEES

One of the issues of special concern for several of the faculty persons was whether educators experienced in teaching older children should be hired (with or without retraining) to teach preschoolers. With declining enrollments all across the country, many elementary school teachers are out of work, and school districts are under pressure to find placements for them. Many districts have responded by hiring these teachers for preschool classrooms, either in programs for handicapped children (now served under P.L. 94-142) or, in some states, for nonhandicapped four-year-olds. The PGI faculty generally questioned the wisdom of this solution. Mary Lane suggested that considerable retraining would be necessary:

> If we're going to try to preserve the jobs of those presently teaching by adding four-year-olds to the system, we're going to have to retrain a lot of teachers. Right now we don't even have many teachers well trained to teach five-year-olds, and there's a

great difference in philosophy as well as techniques for teaching a four-year-old rather than a five-year-old.

Lane's point about the difference between four- and five-year-olds suggests that a basic understanding of child development is requisite for a preschool teacher, who often works with children across a wide range of developmental levels. It is this knowledge of development, on which appropriate goals and expectations for children are built, which Frances Horowitz indicated elementary school teachers do not have:

> Many people believe that if you're trained as an elementary school teacher, you can do preschool education, parent education or work with handicapped kids. However, very little elementary training is relevant to these things. For instance, early child development, just plain normal development, is often not a part of the training of an elementary school teacher.

The question of whether training and experience with older children generalizes to work with preschoolers is even more complicated when considered from the point of view of Maynard Reynolds. He wondered out loud about the source of trainees for the education of handicapped infants and toddlers:

> It's pretty clear that the policies in our society are carrying services into earlier periods in the lives of children. We are expected under Public Law 94-142 to begin programs for handicapped children at age 3, and in many communities they're trying to push below that and begin at birth or even before in making special provisions. The question is, how are we going to train the people to serve these infants and young children? What should that training be like? What should be the sources of trainees? We're under a lot of pressure right now to retrain people who have been teaching older children. Is that a good source of early childhood trainees, or should they come from somewhere else?

WHAT SHOULD A GOOD PRESCHOOL TEACHER KNOW AND DO?

Criteria For Good Teaching

To ask whether teachers of older children would make good preschool teachers is to imply that criteria exist by which we can identify the knowledge and skills of a good early childhood educator. In Robert Granger's view, these criteria are to date largely speculative, because most investigations of teacher effectiveness have focused on elementary school teachers. Granger framed the basic question and offered an honest but sobering answer:

> The general question is, just what is a good preschool teacher? Or, put another way, what are some of the critical teaching skills that teachers of preschool children must have? We know very little about the things that a good preschool teacher does that actually help children to develop attitudes about themselves that are positive in achievement settings. With teachers and parents in Georgia I've discovered that there is a sort of conventional wisdom about the characteristics of a good teacher, but there is no real data base to answer this question. The research that has been done on teacher effectiveness has typically been done in elementary school classrooms. So, if you asked me how I was going to train a quality preschool teacher for a group of kids I'd be a little bit at a loss: I'd have to rely right now on conventional wisdom.

Our lack of knowledge about critical teaching skills, according to Granger, is related to our lack of understanding of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge a child acquires in school that help him/her become a more self-actualized person later in life. Understanding of these things should be the foundation of our evaluation of teaching skills:

> We need to really look much more rigorously for those things that, if a kid acquires them, will help him/her later on down the line. One of those things would be attitudes that a kid acquires about such things as inquisitiveness, curiosity, and things like that -- a willingness to seek out other people or other things.

Then the more that a teacher helps children to acquire certain sorts of skills for engaging the environment, the more I would be inclined to say that that teacher is a good teacher.

Knowledge of Child Development

Besides the conventional wisdom and the smattering of research that does exist, we have some clues about the qualities, skills, and knowledge of an effective preschool teacher. Some of the PGI faculty offered such clues in the form of expert opinion. Frances Horowitz, in the statement quoted above (p.42), expressed her conviction about the importance of a background in child development. Donald Stedman also stressed the importance of this knowledge but lamented that research knowledge in child development is poorly utilized, not only in the training of elementary teachers but of early childhood educators as well:

> I'm not happy at all with the way in which we are going about preparing professional personnel in the early childhood area. We're acting as if there's no such thing as developmental psychology in many instances, ignoring the fact that we have a wealth of child development literature. It somehow lays over here and doesn't get into the hands of people who are preparing to be practitioners except in a few demonstration programs. For example, one of the important pieces of research that's been done in many years, in my judgment, is the work done by Hess and Shipman, which looked at maternal teaching styles. I think that this has yet to really enter the teacher training or the educational program activity. We really need to take more account of things like adult styles -- whether they're instructional strategies or whether they're just adult behaviors -- and the extent to which they have any effect on the quantity or quality of the child's learning or performance.

Stedman's example is instructive: if research results indicate that a given teaching style or strategy is superior to other styles and strategies, then this knowledge should be incorporated into the training of teachers. It must be pointed out, however, that "superior educational results" must be considered in light of the diversity of subcultural goals and values.

Sensitivity To Social Development

Steven Asher stressed the important implications for teacher training of research on the development of peer relations and, more generally, of social skills. He argued that people in education are just beginning to appreciate the importance of social relations:

> One of the things that is referred to in school systems is that socialization is really the school's hidden curriculum. Although many people recognize that socialization probably is one of the most important things that kids get out of school, we're just beginning to find out what impact poor socialization or poor social skills has on children's later life adjustment. This means that educational institutions will be forced to pay more attention to this area.

This suggests that teachers will need to be aware of the development of social skills and will also need to know how to help those children whose development in this area is in some way interrupted. Asher suggested that teachers are currently concerned but uneasy about helping children with social relationship difficulties:

> One thing that characterizes teachers, it seems to me, is a real concern for that individual kid who is known not to have friends, or who is disruptive and/or aggressive -- the kind of individual in the classroom who is causing problems for the teacher, for the kids, or for the child him/herself. I find teachers interested in helping individual problem children but not knowing what to do, unsure about what things might be effective or not effective. There is more a sense of "Gee, I'm not sure I can do anything in this area," than there is a sense of "I don't think this is important." They think it's important but are uncertain as to what kinds of practice would be effective.

Several intervention strategies for facilitating a child's acquisition of social skills have been developed and researched. Asher and his colleagues have developed a "coaching" technique

which consists of a coach instructing a child how to perform a given skill, giving the child a chance to try out the skill with a peer, and reviewing the practice session with the child. Asher suggested that as the effectiveness of this technique and others is demonstrated, they should become part of a teacher's instructional repertoire.

Planning And Management Skills

Above and beyond emphasizing the need for knowledge in the area of social skill development, however, Asher suggested a new model of the teacher which would demand a profound change in teacher preparation. When asked who should intervene with a child who has poor social skills (e.g., the teacher, the aide, the social worker, the school psychologist), Asher responded that this intervention may best be carried out by a volunteer or by a teacher's aide, freeing the teacher to play his/her proper role of planner/manager. Asher described this role and the objections that teachers may raise toward adopting it:

> It seems like teachers need to think of themselves more like planners or managers. This is a difficult thing to get teachers to appreciate -- the need for thinking of themselves as managers of instruction or planners as opposed to just one-to-one or one-to-group service providers. I'm struck when I talk to teachers who are doing remedial work with kids, the ones who give a lot of direct service to kids; if I tell them about something like a peer tutoring program, for example, they sometimes get a glazed look. I think the glazed look means, "How much would I enjoy doing that? The kids would be doing all the teaching and I would be charting stuff from a distance or planning -- what would be the kicks for me?"
>
> This is funny to me, because planning and managing instruction can really be exciting and in some ways is more varied than having to be there day in and day out, slugging it out on the firing line. It can in some ways be a more stimulating life, yet it's difficult for people whose positive teaching experiences have come from these one-to-one interactions or interactions with groups to appreciate that managing can be an interesting

alternative in the classroom. We need to have teachers think in terms not only of using themselves as resources to help kids develop social skills, but of using paraprofessionals, or using older peers or other people who can come in and help out with the kids. I think it's part of a broader problem, one of reconceptualizing the role of the teacher, where the teacher is more of a manager than a direct service provider.

If the proper role of the teacher of young children is planner/manager, then the focus of training must shift toward planning data-based programs and monitoring student progress, training other adults and children as agents of instruction, and coordinating the various educational programs implemented by adults and peer tutors.

Respect For Diversity

Whether as direct instructors, facilitators, or managers, Frances Horowitz and Robert Granger urged that early childhood educators must respect the diverse values of children and parents who are physically, mentally, culturally, or in some other way different from the norm. Granger emphasized that teacher educators are in urgent need of knowledge about the effects of teacher attitudes on children. He suggested that close attention be paid to the kinds of attitudes teachers hold about children who are in some way(s) "nonstandard" and the consequence of these attitudes for teacher behavior. For example, he said, we need to study how teachers perceive handicapped children in the mainstream and to be alert to the danger of attitudes that may lead to behavior that is in some way debilitating to these children.

Horowitz urged that teachers of young children not "lay their values" on parents of a different cultural heritage. She distinguished between expressing one's own values and foisting one's values on another. This distinction was evident in her response to the question of whether a White middle-class teacher (who enjoys expressing physical affection towards children) should hug an American Indian child whose culture may not value warm physical contact!

If you did it in the context of the meaningful relationship you have with that child, I don't see any

problem with that. If you looked at the mother when you picked the kid up and then you communicated to her that she wasn't a good mother because she didn't hug her child, then that's where the problem comes in. I think for children to have different kinds of experiences which come out of different cultures is fine, but when a representative of one culture says to another "You're a bad parent because you don't do what I do," that's a problem.

While agreeing that diversity of values should be respected, Steven Asher argued that teachers must be strong in insisting that some skills must be taught because they <u>are</u> important in this culture. He suggested that this is more difficult for social skills than for academic skills like reading because teaching social skills is sometimes confused with teaching values:

As professional educators we're comfortable saying, "Your child needs to know how to read, whether you like or care about it or not." Of course, we don't have to say that often because parents do care a lot about it. But somehow when we get into social areas, we feel cautious or defensive or reluctant to get involved in teaching things to kids which might contradict the parents' values. I think in the end we're going to need to know more about what the functions of different kinds of skills are, for our own protection. We're going to need to be able to say, "We need to teach these things based on good evidence that if kids don't learn them they may have some really serious problems."

By and large I find that most parents don't need much persuading on these things. They understand that it's important for a kid to have communication skills. However, a lot of discussion about value education in schools has thrown together moral values, social skills, sex education, etc. We've sort of packaged these together and then said, "Look at the uproar." But the uproar may be very selectively targeted; there's not much uproar over helping kids develop oral communication skills so that they can make their meanings known to

another person or cooperate on a task or know how to help another kid.

Mary Lane emphasized that valuing diversity in the form of individual and cultural differences among children should be reflected in teachers' assessments of children. Arguing that both our models of assessment and our widely used instruments are too restrictive in their focus, Lane suggested that teachers be trained to develop their own assessment tools and strategies which would be relevant to the abilities of their particular students and which would cover a wide range of child behavior:

> I would like to see the individual teacher given more training and opportunity to work out her own assessment procedures so that they could include a broad range of behaviors -- social, emotional, cognitive, and health. I have been able to work with teachers in such a way that they could devise instruments and collect and keep files of children's work which could be shared with parents and which would show progress.
>
> We tend to use two models of assessment which I think are inappropriate, or at least they are constricting. One is the medical model. We use terms that come from the medical model when we talk about diagnosis and treatment. The other model that we use is the biological-scientific model, where you're interested in putting things in little categories and counting them all and labeling them. I don't think those things adequately measure human development. They may be indicators, but they are not the whole picture.

Skills For Meeting Special Needs

Sensitivity to diversity -- to individual differences -- is relevant to Samuel Meisels' comments about the teacher skills necessary to integrate handicapped children into a preschool or day care program. While a general knowledge of child development is the foundation for the "developmental approach" (in which handicapped children are not seen as qualitatively different from nonhandicapped children but as falling somewhere along the normal continuum of development in given skill areas), which he advocates for special educators, Meisels argued that great precision in the observation and description of the individual child is

demanded of the teacher of the child with special needs. Meisels was asked if a preschool teacher well-trained in a traditional "whole child" nursery school approach would have the skills necessary for mainstreaming. His response emphasized the critical importance of individualizing instruction, which traditional nursery school teachers are often not prepared to do. He also stressed the need to focus in detail on specific skill areas, also not usually a component of traditional nursery training:

> Their perceptions will need to be much more focused. You need to be able to say to one of those teachers, "Tell me about this kid," and you have to expect that the teacher then can tell you what the child can do. She needs to tell you in a way that is reliable in some fashion. So this teacher who teaches in the "whole child" tradition needs to look at specific abilities of the kid in a way she/he hasn't in the past. Teachers really do need to be educated in how to identify skill areas, and to learn that there's nothing wrong with "pushing" kids to acquire skills in these areas.

Meisels went on to underscore the challenge inherent in helping a special needs child develop specific skills:

> A child with articulation problems, regardless of what's going to happen five years later, is a child we're going to want to teach some articulation skills to. It's going to be tough, and it's not always fun. So let's find the most organized way of doing it, and make it something interesting to talk about. We'll also have to reward the child so he gains in self-esteem and power of self.

Both the challenge of working with handicapped children and the importance of giving teachers-in-training the special skills required were reiterated by Donald Stedman. He warned against placing student teachers in highly challenging teaching situations with exceptional students before they have an adequate base of knowledge and skills:

> It's very easy to learn not to like handicapped kids if you are thrust into their midst without knowing what to do with them. I came dangerously close in my practice

teaching days when I was a student at Peabody. I had to teach educable mentally retarded kids for a semester before I had learned much about who these kids were. And I spent a lot of time avoiding them and bootlegging it and watching the clock and stalling and stuff. It was really a terribly laborsome experience. And I think it was mostly because I was put into a kind of perfunctory next-step-in-a-sequence kind of program without any thought being given to how that related to my total professional involvement.

The Role Of Clinical Judgement

In the last several paragraphs we have explored some of the areas of knowledge and skill that the expert judgment of the PGI faculty indicates are crucial for early childhood educators. However, as Granger pointed out, there is little in the way of research to substantiate that these things are important. Given this lack of empirically based criteria for judging excellence (or mediocrity) in teaching, Stedman proposed that expert judgment or the "clinical inclination" be used more liberally in teacher training programs to encourage promising teachers to continue on the path and to counsel others out of education:

We tend to act as if anybody could be an early childhood educator, and I simply don't believe that's true. In the clinical sciences people refer to the 'clinical inclination' -- the ability one acquires over the years to be able to judge who's going to be a good pediatrician and who isn't, or who's going to be a good clinical person as opposed to a non-people oriented person. I've seen an awful lot of early childhood educators who I think really don't like kids, and somewhere in the course of their training they should have been offered the opportunity to deal themselves out. In the Peace Corps, it became an honor to deal yourself out of the program if you felt after the first phases of training that you didn't fit. It wasn't a disgrace; they had parties for you and would say, "Well, you're bright, you really figured out that you could help us best by not helping us." You know, that's an extreme point, but I think more of that ought to be built into our professional preparation of early childhood educators.

DELIVERING TRAINING AND CREDENTIALS

The discussion so far has addressed the issues of what training in early childhood education should consist of and who should get this training. We turn now to an exploration of selected issues pertaining to the active delivery of training and credentials to teachers of young children. The focus of our attention is the optimal conditions for preparing infant day care personnel, the challenges of training and certifying child care workers already in the field, and the problems universities face in trying to deliver inservice training to keep professionals at a high level of expertise in early childhood education.

"Real Life" Training

Donald Stedman warned (above) against placing student teachers in an instructional situation that is too demanding. The training problem which Henry Ricciuti raised was just the opposite: students who do their student teaching in university laboratory schools often do not get experience that is representative of the more difficult challenges of "real life" work in child care. Ricciuti's solution to this problem at Cornell University was to move the university's infant care center off campus, where it has been possible to learn what caregiving in the real world is like, and thus to offer students training experiences that are relevant to their later work in caregiving environments.

Ricciuti emphasized the importance of offering students all-day experience in child care, which is usually not offered in the university lab schools:

> The main purpose of our center is to serve as a demonstration and training center, and many of the questions that we get from other centers we can now speak to from our first-hand experience. We're suffering the same way they are. I feel very strongly that many university programs which are concerned with training students to work in the field with young children have tended to give them experience which in some ways is unrealistic. If their main experience is in a university lab school, they can learn a lot, but they don't learn what the real world is like. I think it's very important for students

to get experience in all-day child care settings. The best way for students to learn about child care is to have direct experience in meeting the everyday problems of families and children who need day care.

Credentialing Child Care Workers

Whereas Ricciuti's concerns are with preparing teachers to enter the field, Robert Granger, the executive director of the Child Development Associates Consortium (CDA), is grappling with the problems of providing training and recognition to teachers already in the field. The CDA project is a federal program for training and assessing people who work with young children in center-based programs. Although CDA has been primarily involved in credentialing teachers of 3-5 year olds, Granger expressed his interest in developing a credential for those who work with even younger children:

> I think there is a great need. No matter what one's political persuasion may be or how one feels about infant and toddler care, many infants and toddlers are in a variety of day care centers. I'm interested in developing a credentialing system for people working with infants and toddlers.

Granger also expressed his interest in identifying the critical skills and credentialing procedures for family day care providers. Because many more children receive family day care than center-based care, this is indeed an important concern.

The majority of preschool age children not cared for by a parent, however, are cared for at home by a baby sitter. Granger responded this way to the question of the feasibility of the (perhaps absurd sounding) "babysitting certificate":

> There are standards in other countries for babysitters. Sweden, for example, has a way of licensing family home caregivers that care for only two or three children at maximum. However, in Sweden it is important to do that because the social system subsidizes the care of those kids, so in order for a person to get those subsidies they have to become licensed to do it. I don't know of anything similar that's going on in the United States.

I'm not sure that it's necessarily a good thing to make everybody get credentialed because, given the state we are in right now -- with the lack of places for people to go for child care -- perhaps allowing people to use and in fact encouraging them to use some of the informal networks that they have established is a good thing. Certain industries have responded to what they perceive as the child care needs of their people by providing day care services. What has happened in some cases is that absenteeism has gone up for the employees because they have lost contact with their informal network, and when the kids have been sick and couldn't come to the day care center they have had nobody to call on.

I can't imagine frankly that the skills of working with children in a family day care home with seven kids would not overlap with those necessary for "babysitting" for a group of two kids. And so if we could figure out what are good indicators of skill for the family day care provider, we could make that knowledge available to parents who could look for these qualities and skills in anybody who's going to take care of their kids at home.

CDA certification is a competency-based system. By demonstrating competency in a variety of skill areas, child care workers can receive the CDA certification. Granger emphasized the importance of this credential, noting that credentialed people tend to perceive themselves as more competent -- more as professionals -- than do non-certified people. Even excellent Head Start teachers, he pointed out, often disparage their own abilities for want of a license.

Because of the importance of the recognition of competency that a credential brings, Granger urged that some incentives be developed to encourage child care workers to develop the requisite competencies:

We need to try and build greater incentives into the system for people to seek some sort of training and ultimately some sort of credential to verify that they are competent in some way. Right now there are no incentives for child care workers, just as there are

very few incentives for excellence in the public schools. Frankly, the only incentive right now for people to get some sort of credential is the satisfaction of "the badge of honor." At this point there are no economic incentives or anything else in the child care community. That kind of feeling of recognition by others, I think, is the only thing going for it right now; I would imagine that it's a very powerful motive, although I don't think that it's enough. I'd like to make it a lot more attractive for people working in early childhood settings to engage in professional growth.

Evaluating Professional Competency

Being competency-based, CDA assessment includes observation of candidates on the job so that their child care skills can be evaluated. This quite clearly may be threatening to many people and could work against even powerful economic incentives which may become available for seeking further training. When asked about this problem, Granger described the "collaborative" model of assessment and training employed by CDA, which is aimed at neutralizing the teacher's fear of being judged and of failing against a standard of competency:

I think that any time you talk about performance indicators or standards of quality, it smacks in some way of accountability. And yes, once standards are established, then it is possible that I will not meet them. This implies that the mode in which you help people to gain skills and the mode in which you work with people to assess those skills is really critical. The only way you can diffuse the fear or insecurity is to make the system responsive to the emotional needs and the strengths the individual has. So, for example, it would be clearly inappropriate for a set of standards to be developed which said that a teacher in all situations must look exactly like XYZ and that a person is going to come from some other place and watch that teacher to see if she does X, Y or Z and if she doesn't then she's not a competent teacher. However, I think that there are several more useful approaches such as: involving the child caregiver in the assessment process and therefore

as a partner in the decision making; giving a lot of weight in the judgment about a person's skill to the opinions of people who have been working with that person over time and who that person trusts; involving parents in making decisions about that person's strengths and weaknesses; not demanding that a person be everything to everybody; and recognizing that each person has relative strengths and weaknesses. All these things seem to make competency evaluation a lot more humane, and that's clearly the way the whole CDA thing has gone. I think that this collaborative model of assessment and collaborative model of training (on which most of the training programs are based) works against the kinds of fears that arise when people start talking about competencies or about performance standards.

Providing In-Service Training

Donald Stedman shared an insider's view of the difficulty universities face in providing in-service training. As an administrator at the University of North Carolina, Stedman has been involved in delivering training to public school teachers, usually through arrangements with the state department of education. When asked if universities are doing an adequate job of providing in-service to early childhood educators, especially kindergarten and primary grade teachers, Stedman responded with a powerful example of the difficulties in the planning and coordination of training:

Well, I think some universities are and some aren't. I don't have the data at hand. My guess is that the majority are still not responding in a systematic, organized way. I think that's largely a function of nobody crowding them to do it, but I would not want to see that kind of thing legislated. I think of one state as a good example of what happens when the legislature rears back and says every teacher must have a three-hour course in the introduction to exceptional children. What resulted in the passage of that law in June was 17,000 people showing up in September to take that course and there was simply nobody to give it. They couldn't handle it. That's what happens when one group

causes something to be done by fiat, out of desperation or frustration, in order to force the system to respond.

Stedman elaborated on the problems of planning and coordination in explaining these factors which inhibit the universities' capacities to respond to the need for training in the field. These constraints on response are seemingly built into the decision making, funding, and faculty promotion structures of the universities. First, much "lead time" is needed for the university to respond:

> One of the problems that higher education has is that it needs more lead time to change than service systems usually give it. The university needs to know 12-18 months ahead of time when you want certain numbers of staff delivered with certain kinds of competencies. You cannot say in March that you need 3,000 teachers in July, and then get mad at the university for not delivering. There needs to be a closer connection between the planning that the service system (principally state education departments) engages in and the planning that the universities do in order to deliver quality staff development services appropriately and on time.

The universities' funding structure also affects their ability to deliver training:

> A second thing is that the way in which higher education is financed is not conducive to reaching out to provide in-service education to professional people of any kind, whether they're physicians, teachers, or whatever. What's required is a fiscal policy that allows universities to count the trainees in field based in-service programs in the same way that they count students in their on-campus programs in order to generate funds. You may not be aware of it, but the way universities are financed is that they present the enrollment to the legislature just like public schools present their enrollment, and they get paid as a function of head count. But you can't count the people who are in the field based in-service programs because they're full time employees and not full time students. Now we're talking about providing a fiscal policy which many

states probably couldn't afford, if you consider the massive in-service need. This is a major reason why universities are not "responsive." They simply cannot afford to respond.

Finally, there are few incentives for university faculty to spend time in field based training activity:

> The promotion and contract renewal systems for faculty members do not reward exemplary service in the field. It is risky as hell if you are an untenured assistant professor to spend too much time out there because when it comes time for the senior faculty to evaluate you for promotion or tenure, they are going to look at your scholarly publications and perhaps your teaching effectiveness on campus. I'm not saying that I support that. I'm saying that's the reality in terms of the reward schedules for career development for faculty members in universities.

Given these constraints on the universities' effectiveness, Stedman was asked whether other institutions, companies, or agencies outside the university should take over the lion's share of in-service training. In his view, this should not happen, at least not yet. He explained that the mission of some universities is outreach/in-service activity and that these institutions should continue to provide these services and not try to do research. Universities whose central mission is research should not, Stedman said, engage in these outreach activities. He stressed that a differentiation of these roles would make the practice of research and the delivery of in-service training more efficient and effective.

Stedman also emphasized the importance for those institutions that do provide in-service training of developing more sophisticated methods for evaluating the effectiveness of their services:

> We're still largely doing needs assessment with a checklist and we are evaluating workshops with a checklist one hour before everybody leaves and hoping that will cast some light on the effectiveness of the workshop.

By carefully evaluating the effects of training efforts, we may be able to judge the effectiveness of different modes of delivering in-service training. Knowledge in this area, according to Stedman, is sorely needed. It is also needed, of course, in the area of pre-service training. It may be that only by carefully assessing the effects of current training efforts can programs to train teachers improve their ability to meet the needs of educators and children.

Chapter Five

THE USES OF RESEARCH

Each member of the PGI faculty was asked to comment on applications of research findings to practice in child care and education as well as on the use of research to evaluate and justify practice, programs, and policy related to young children. The faculty's responses are organized around three general topics, which are the foci of this chapter: the nature of the relationship between research and practice (and between researcher and practitioner), illustrated by examples of important contributions of social science research to educational and child health care practice; the contemporary importance of evaluation research --that research which attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of practice and programs; the contributions of research to public policy, including laws and guidelines that affect the lives of young children. The many difficulties in interpreting and applying empirical findings and the challenge to do research which is faithful to the complexity of human development were also discussed extensively; these topics form the basis of Chapter 6.

THE APPLICATION OF RESEARCH

In the fields of early childhood education and development, research is put to several uses, most often to inform or generate new practice and to evaluate new and already existing practices. Basic research in child development has long provided age-appropriate goals and expectations for children in preschool programs; behavior modification research has yielded many widely used language development programs and behavioral intervention

strategies; research on the effectiveness of various early childhood education models has been used to justify the funding of early intervention programs.

Researcher and Practitioner

In the interviews, Donald Stedman and Joseph Stevens suggested that practice should inform research, as well as vice versa. In Stedman's words,

> We do many things intuitively that don't have a good research base. This doesn't mean they're wrong. In fact, many things done intuitively are excellent activities from which to ferret out good research questions. More of our research questions should come from service activity than they do now.

Stevens echoed Stedman's point that more research questions should be derived from the experience of practitioners:

> Not only can teachers and parents be made partners in research efforts directed at answering the researchers' theoretical questions, but hopefully researchers will more and more be seeking the practitioners' judgment as to whether or not the right questions are being raised and researched.

This dual emphasis on using research to evaluate practice and on using practice as a source of research questions suggests a need for interchange between researcher and practitioner. Such interchange differs from the more traditional model in which the practitioners apply whatever they can get from the researcher's laboratory that relates to their needs. In effect, Stedman and Stevens suggested a cycle which looks like this:

```
                    (answers,          implemen-     results of
   (questions)      strategies)        tation        evaluation
practice------> research-------> practice------> research------->
```

This reciprocal relationship between researcher and practitioner has important implications for the generation of empirical knowledge that is relevant to practical questions. This approach also supports "ecologically valid" research (discussed in Chapter 6) that could illuminate developmental and educational theory.

Empirical Sources Of Current Educational Practice

Our interviewees discussed a broad range of research applications in the field of educational practice. Donald Stedman suggested that virtually every educational practice could be traced back to some research activity. He said that the origins of most of what is being done today in early childhood education programs could be traced to three empirical wellsprings -- B. F. Skinner's research on learning and the modification of behavior, research on social learning, and research in the area of educational technology:

> Skinner's observation that systematic manipulation of the environment leads to changes in behavior has been proven particularly adaptable with extreme cases of behavior disorder. We see it operative, too, in more subtle instances, in certain reading programs or in modes of scheduling reinforcement used by teachers who may not be aware that they are engaging in fixed or variable ratio reinforcement. In the domain of social learning, role modeling and providing examples emphasizing language and social competence are "softer" approaches in the sense that a broad range of skills are fostered, including attitudinal development. The educational technology approach includes the kit developers and the behavioral objective setters and the proponents of automated learning. I worry about this approach because it generally leaves teachers trained predominantly in that mode at sea when they encounter a unique situation. They don't seem to have the flexibility or adaptability that is called for in most classroom settings.

Multidisciplinary Research And Educational Practice

While Stedman focused on the contributions of psychological research to early education, Maynard Reynolds described how research in a variety of areas (not just child development or early childhood education) could profitably be applied to the development of optimal physical, social, and personal environments for learning:

One of the problems is just to think about matters sufficiently so that you can specify what kinds of research or what domains of research would be relevant. One of the things I've tried to do, for example, is to imagine what mainstreaming or the principle of "least restrictive alternative" might involve. For example, it obviously involves some architecture, research in architecture that relates to acoustical management, management of elevation changes so that people who have trouble hearing can hear and people that have trouble moving can move.

Research relating to social structures is also important. That is, children need to have experience in dealing with diversity, in working in groups in which the members are different, where they make different contributions, where those differences are valued and understood. Relevant research would show how we can achieve social structures in which diversity is a plus rather than a problem. Teaching in ways that take into account differences in rate of learning and in behavior is also very important.

Sometimes it seems to me that people think about research too simplistically. They think that the only research that is relevant relates just to attributes of children or something of that sort. Or they think that research is simply a matter of running big horse races between special classes and regular classes or mainstream and non-mainstream. I'm suggesting that we need to address questions like: What does architecture have to contribute to the creation of environments that will accommodate diversity? How can sociology help us deal with diversity in a constructive way? What do we know about creating learning settings that permit varieties of activities at any one time? What do we know about better management of teaching-learning situations that would reduce disorder (and thus the likelihood of disturbing behaviors) and increase the likelihood of attention to important learning tasks? What do we know about accommodation to differences in rate of learning? What do we know about giving children more responsibility for their environment and seeing

them gradually take more responsibility? Those, I think, are some of the things that we need to begin to consider in research. We need to summarize that research, and we need to do it. We need to disseminate it, and we need to use it.

The Importance Of Accurate Description -- Some Examples

Robert Granger, Rosalyn Rubin, and Frances Horowitz discussed one of the basic functions of research -- to describe accurately the activity of the child/group/system under observation. This description serves as the foundation for application and intervention. Granger, who has been involved in researching how teachers respond to "nonstandard" children and how children themselves experience school, indicated that careful research is needed simply to discover what happens in the classroom situation. He suggested that careful observation, guided by relevant theories of social and cognitive development, will yield better maps of the classroom territory and better descriptions of what occurs in classrooms in terms of child experience as well as in terms of child behavior:

> The better we begin to understand how teachers respond to "nonstandard" children in their classrooms, the better we're going to be able to understand why we get such radically different performances from those children in the school context. Once we can describe more accurately what's occurring, we'll be able to understand better how we might intervene into that system. Research that is moving towards a "cognitive conception" of what's happening, rather than simply a behavioral conception of what's happening will lead us to a greater depth of understanding, which will then lead us to a better feeling for how to intervene.

The quest for accurate descriptions of "what's happening" may seem elementary, but in many ways this is a most profound level of knowledge. Horowitz and Rubin related cases in which research shed new light on what in fact does happen in family and school systems, thereby dramatically changing popular and professional understanding of problems and clearing the way for profound changes in attitude. Horowitz offered the example of recent research that takes the blame for some problem children off the

mother and that in Horowitz's words, could "lead to more realistic attitudes toward parenting":

> A recent monograph by Jerry Patterson, entitled "Mothers: The Unacknowledged Victims," describes some very difficult children whose mothers are subjected to enormous amounts of adverse stimulation. Someone observing the interactions of these mothers and children might easily say that these are not good mothers, not recognizing that the mothers' behaviors have been shaped by their children's aversive stimulation. If such a pattern is to be changed, there must be more positive reinforcement of the mothers.
>
> The implications of this research in terms of our attitudes about who is to blame are very important, especially for the helping professional. The problem is not that the mother's behavior is inappropriate for that child; the problem is that a system has been established which almost never reinforces the mother. The mother is under the aversive control of her child. The only way to change that mother's behavior is to change the aversive interaction pattern that has developed between the child and the mother. This research has enabled us to change the focus of the definition of the problem as much as enabling us to change specifically what people do.

Rubin pointed out that her research findings are forcing reevaluation of the nature and causes of school behavior problems. As mentioned in Chapter 1, she found that an extraordinarily high percentage of children are labeled behavior problems by at least one of their teachers in the elementary years. This finding has confirmed the hunches of many parents and educators that our expectations for young children are often inappropriate:

> People who have commented -- especially educators --have expressed a lack of surprise by the findings, as if they had had a feeling all along that our demands on children were excessive, as were our expectations for conformity. These findings are empirical data now available to substantiate what people have felt. Many parents, in

talking with the teachers about their children's behavior problems, have been concerned about the rigidity of the classroom setting, but have felt that it was their problem or their child's problem because obviously if everybody else did okay, something must be the matter with them. And the expression has been one of relief -- that at least I'm absolved and my child is absolved from the blame of having a teacher think that s/he is the problem.

I think most people understand quite well that there is a difference between a child who is called a problem once during his school experience and a child who is consistently identified as a problem by everyone in the school. If everyone who has contact with the child notes a problem then there is probably something happening that needs attention. But parents, who had not previously understood this, now felt relieved that they didn't need to run off to see a psychiatrist, which some parents did, just because one teacher in some middle elementary grade said their son was having behavior problems and recommended that they get special help.

Once again, this research has been influential in forcing a shift in our focus on behavior problems in school from individual children to school environments and on the expectations for behavior in these environments.

EVALUATION RESEARCH

One type of research that is becoming increasingly common in the field of early childhood education is evaluation research. Evaluation research can be used for several purposes, e.g., to determine whether a program is in fact being implemented as planned or whether a program meets its goals. The results of program evaluation research are often used to justify the continuation or discontinuation of educational programs.

The Importance of Evaluation

Samuel Meisels made a plea for evaluation research activity to monitor the effectiveness of early education and intervention programs:

> Too often in the United States we've had descriptions of programs that are not applicable and are not understandable to other people, that just describe a successful program and don't tell how to do it or don't have appropriate evaluation measures. I worry about this because of the potential backlash when replications of these programs are not as successful as the original models. Implementation of intervention programs or any education program without appropriate evaluation is a very grave problem.

Donald Stedman also discussed the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of our current educational practices in order to make sure that classroom time is well spent:

> I worry occasionally that we've outrun our technology in terms of providing competence in basic skills and general knowledge to preschoolers, both in terms of instruction to parents and direct instruction to children. We run the risk of wasting our time or the child's time, or in some small number of instances, of modifying the child's behavior inappropriately by using a technology that we don't have well tested out.
>
> It doesn't matter as much as being sure that a drug is well tested before you put it on the market. We've taken this whole thing too seriously if we think educational strategies have <u>that</u> degree of impact or importance. On the other <u>hand</u>, in terms of the amount of effort we're spending, and the amount of the child's time we're occupying, we ought to be sure that what we're doing is as productive as possible.

Joseph Stevens was enthusiastic about attempting to evaluate the more far-reaching or "spin off" effects of intervention programs. He suggested that if we could identify and measure

these indirect yet important effects, we would be in a better position to implement maximally effective and efficient programs:

> Something that intrigues me is looking at the spin-offs of intervention, that is, looking at an educational intervention program not just in terms of its targeted outcomes, but in terms of the program's second order or unintended effects. The Kirshner report on the effects of Head Start on community institutions concluded that Head Start not only impacted kids but may have had an impact on the quality and quantity of services provided to low-income families by social service agencies in particular communities. Maybe what is needed is a look at the relationship between the program and the ecological system in which it is placed, and at how the program impacts not only the intended clients like the parents and the children, but also how that program affects parents and the behavior of children who are not involved in programs but are connected in some way to the participants in the program.
>
> Perhaps we need to think more carefully about "diffusion of treatment" effects, and if we can measure diffusion, maybe we can plan more effective intervention projects so that we maximize the possibilities of diffusion. For example, if we selected parents for participation in a parent education program who had strong family ties or strong friendship ties with other people in the community, and we trained those people in behavior modification techniques or effective teaching techniques, are these people likely to transmit those kinds of skills to their friends, to their sisters and brothers? To what extent does that kind of thing occur?

Evaluation Research And Practice: The Example Of Mainstreaming

Meisels cited preschool mainstreaming as an area in which research is not being applied by practitioners. The research data currently available on structuring social interaction between handicapped and nonhandicapped children is not being used, he suggested, because it is too narrowly conceived:

> The research that exists is not being used by many practitioners. I think that the preschool mainstreaming-related research is very limited because it implements a single instructional model or paradigm. Much of this research represents fascinating studies of social interactions, but these data are often not appropriate for a Head Start program; and you can't sell it to the parents. Much of the behavioral research has yielded results which can't be implemented on a broad basis. That's not at all useful.

Meisels went on to suggest the kind of research which would prove useful to practitioners, namely, research focusing on specific evaluation questions:

> What we need to do is to generate research evidence of a different type, research evidence that tells us about what happens when handicapped and nonhandicapped children share the same classroom with teachers who are engaged in some form of intervention. If there is one thing that all research has told us, it is that putting all children into any single intervention program isn't going to do anybody any good. We need to find out about the spectrum of activities that a teacher can engage in, ranging from laissez-faire to more highly structured approaches, and the effects that these activities produce on each of the children in the classroom.
>
> As mainstreaming is implemented, people will expect that it's going to work for children in certain ways: it's going to work for handicapped kids; it's going to work for nonhandicapped kids; it's going to work for society. Although mainstreaming may work for some of the populations, it probably won't work for all of them. This underscores the importance of having a system which is set up for evaluating the outcomes so that you can say, "Well, it's not helpful for this kind of child or this particular child in this situation." We need to look at why it may or may not be helpful. In other words, if there are no specific evaluation questions being asked, then people will tend to grab on to the biggest thing and the biggest thing is the program itself [e.g., mainstreaming].

Methodological Difficulties

Despite the general enthusiasm for evaluation research, the view was widely expressed that evaluating educational outcomes is difficult, in part because many important "effects" of early childhood education are "not countable" -- are not easily quantifiable for research purposes. For example, the early evaluations of Head Start were roundly criticized for focusing narrowly on childrens' gains in IQ scores rather than on the broad range of (more difficult to measure) effects which programs may have on families, teachers and communities, as well as on children. Some faculty argued that evaluation research which is bound by "the countable" will not accurately reflect or assess the effectiveness of educational efforts. Meisels cited open education as being particularly resistant to traditional models or evaluation which rely on the measurement of quantifiable and predictable goals:

> Program evaluation has traditionally adopted the model of testing children before and after the program is implemented; you know there's been change related to the program if they tested better after than they did before [if a "no program" control group does not similarly improve.].
>
> This model is utterly impossible to use once you change the rules of the game, as I'm suggesting that we should, to accommodate something which is transactional, interactive, developmental. You can't use traditional evaluation models because these kinds of programs are transactional programs and are by definition largely unpredictable as far as what the end product is going to be. We have to develop a whole new technology of program evaluation if we want to answer the questions that are really important.
>
> Open education failed for at least two reasons; one is a lack of technical/advisory support service (which is what is currently happening to mainstreaming). The other reason is that it is not "countable." No one knew how to evaluate open education; we still don't know how to evaluate it. In our program at Tufts we finally

found an evaluation design which was appropriate to the program, but it was so incredibly sophisticated and cumbersome that I don't know if anybody could implement it without extensive funding.

Mary Lane described some of the effects of the Nurseries in Cross-Cultural Education Project (a demonstration project serving low income families) which she directed in San Francisco. Some of the effects were so broad and in some ways subtle (attitudinal change) that they would have been a challenge to "measure":

> We did not begin with a ready-made program. We listened to the parents, and we gradually moved in, doing the things they felt needed to be done. We worked out a home task program which meant going into the homes every week bringing something to them. We had discussion groups and pot lucks and rap groups. We just lived together, and a great many associations came out of it. Our staff said over and over again that the Nurseries in Cross-Cultural Education experience was the most vital thing that had ever happened to them. It was vital because they gave everything that they had to it.
>
> Our program was a demonstration project, and we did not have specific evaluation questions to answer and we did not have a control group, so we can't say very much definitely except that we felt tremendously good about its results. When the project was over, the participants did not want to drop it. They formed a nonprofit corporation called the Cross-Cultural Family Center which has been in operation ever since. It operates a nursery school, two or three day care centers, and employs, as staff, many of the parents who earlier were on welfare now holding positions either as teachers, teachers' aides, community workers, or program directors with the local YWCA.
>
> Other communities could work from such a base, applying a family-center model. Its success depends on having individuals who are committed enough to the idea to give themselves to that effort for a few years.

Undoubtedly, this project had a number of positive effects on children and adults. Yet, it has not been replicated, perhaps

because there was no formal evaluation. Increasingly, formal evaluation data are being required in order to get funding to replicate or to continue successful programs. Policy makers are reluctant to rely on the kinds of qualitative data that are typically reported by demonstration projects.

Our interviewees agreed on the importance of evaluation research, but also that researchers don't yet have methodologies that are capable of evaluating the important effects of early education programs. Thus, something has to give. Stedman argued that the methodology available for evaluating the effectiveness of in-service teacher education, as well as early education, is inadequate, and that researchers should be up front about this:

> I am concerned about the way we are managing programs or the way we are able (or unable) to account for why we're persisting in certain kinds of things. Some of that is a function of not having adequate technology to evaluate them. We're simply unable to evaluate the effectiveness of the various modes of technical assistance or in-service education because we don't have the measures or methodology. We ought to quit trying to bootleg it and tell people we don't have the methodology and quit throwing out all kinds of hyperbole as to why we're doing well. Head Start is a good example; anybody who knows anything about Head Start programs knows that they have health and benefits to the kids involved. But there is difficulty explaining why they don't have dramatic IQ increases. We must be clear about what should be used as a measure of effectiveness!

RESEARCH AND POLICY

Research in early child development and education is often used to support policy decisions and sometimes leads to legislation. Horowitz discussed the nature of research that influences public policy and the less "empirical" factors that shape policy and practice.

Laws, Policies, And Practices

If research is to be the basis for law, the results must be very clearcut regarding questions of great importance. Horowitz

cited what she considered to be the best example of research leading to public law: the research on the detection and treatment of phenylketonuria (PKU -- a genetic defect resulting in the lack of an enzyme needed to digest phenylalanine, an amino acid in proteins):

> We were faced with a condition which led to mental retardation, but through research an effective screening test was developed to identify it, and a special diet developed that could prevent its dire consequences. This led to a law saying that all babies must be screened for PKU. Nobody is upset with the law because the effects of PKU are so devastating if it is not caught, and therefore to prick every baby's heel and take a blood sample is not a very controversial policy.

Horowitz pointed out that there are very few other things about which the research results are so clear and powerful that they serve as the basis for legislation. However, research data can also lead to changes in educational, medical, and social policy. Horowitz indicated, too, that many policies (she offered hospital birthing and postnatal practices as examples) are based on a combination of dogma, the influential arguments of professionals with powerful personalities, and research data which are nowhere near as conclusive as the data on PKU. The example cited below also illustrates how research from other disciplines (in this case, anthropology) can illuminate the problems related to the education and care of young children:

> Giving birth to a baby in a hospital is not mandatory, yet 99% of the babies are born in hospitals largely because the data say that the probability of serious complications goes down when emergency equipment is nearby. One of the consequences of having babies in hospitals was that for the convenience of the hospital, practices of regulating the care of the newborn evolved which included rigid feeding schedules for the baby and keeping the father out of the hospital in the name of hygenic conditions.
>
> Now people are saying that including fathers in the delivery room may have some psychological advantages; we can teach a father to scrub his hands the way we can

teach anybody else to scrub, so let him in the delivery room. The interesting thing is that we have no data to support the advantage of the father's being in or out of the delivery room. I am concerned when I see young couples and sense that the father would rather not be in the delivery room, because I know that if he were to say that the whole world would come down on him for not supporting his wife.

This may come as a surprise, but Betsy Latsoff, an anthropologist and pediatrician, studied the natural birthing practices of so-called primitive peoples, and the one thing that was universal was not the use of drugs or the absence of drugs, or holding the baby close or not holding the baby. The only universal thing was the absence of men. In primitive cultures birthing is a woman's process -- the attendants are women and there are no men present. It seems that often when we change our practices the dogmatism we overthrow is just replaced by another dogmatism. I sometimes want to say to a young guy, "You don't have to go in that delivery room if you don't want to." But, particularly on a college campus, the whole system is pushing him into that delivery room.

A similar situation exists regarding early contact. The data that we've seen have shown some beneficial effects from mothers having access to their babies early in the first few days of life. Nobody says that this is harmful, although one could be a little skeptical about how beneficial it is. The result has been, however, that on a very minimal data base, and because of the strong personalities of the people who presented the evidence, the entire set of post-delivery practices in hospitals has been changed. Having your baby in the room is not only available now but in some hospitals is practically mandatory. The mother who doesn't want her baby in the room is looked upon as being a rejecting mother, and thus a whole set of values is being imposed by that system. The data base on which hospital practices were changed is not the kind that you'd base a law on. It's not PKU kind of evidence. Very often practice gets changed not because a law is made about it, but

because of the personalities of the people who advocate it.

Infancy Research: An Example

Ricciuti and Horowitz identified research on development in the first few weeks of life as having implications for practice and policy. Ricciuti suggested the implications of "at risk" research for interdisciplinary practice with newborns:

> Low birth-weight is typically defined as under five and a half pounds. The average birth-weight is 7¼ pounds. If a baby weighs five pounds, statistically there is a slightly greater risk of less than optimal development. As you go down the weight scale, the risk of mental or neurological difficulty increases. The risk of later difficulty for the low birth-weight or premature baby is even greater if the baby is also reared in an environment that is not supportive of development. A low birth-weight baby who also is growing up under conditions of social and economic stress or adversity is at greater risk than if that same baby is reared under more favorable conditions. What this suggests is that the psychologist, pediatrician, and social worker ought to work together after the low birth-weight baby leaves the hospital to help create conditions of care that are more supportive of the child's development.
>
> One area in which research will have implications for practice is the care of the very sick and premature infant. It is particularly important to study the kinds of environments that can be provided for these infants and their implications for developmental outcome. There have been lots of generalizations made about stimulus deprivation. An intensive care unit is not quite stimulus deprived. In fact, it may be overstimulating. However, there may also be a lack of contingencies -- of consistent, reliable consequences to a baby's behavior -- in that environment; or, there may be insufficient variation so that the baby "habituates" to the environment, and learning is consequently diminished. All of these factors may complicate the problems of a sick infant in terms of developmental outcomes. New

> research may tell us what these environments really are like for these babies and may ultimately have a very direct impact on intervention in these environments. Perhaps we will learn how best to intervene so that if the child has physical problems, the environmental problems do not complicate them.

Horowitz also pointed to language acquisition in the first year of life as an area in which practice (assessment, intervention) is demanding knowledge from research:

> Another area of future development is language acquisition in the first year of life. Records may help us to understand what infants learn about language and their environment and thus enable us to better evaluate early language development. Currently, by the time we find kids who are delayed in language our intervention has to be remedial rather than preventive. We have no good preventive techniques in language acquisition, and we're not going to have them until we understand more about what goes on before the time at which we usually measure productive language. There's a lot to be learned about receptive language acquisition in the first year.

As Horowitz, Ricciuti, and others in this chapter have suggested, practice and policy have been and will continue to be impacted by research in the social sciences. The future contributions of research may be even greater, in fact, as methodological problems like those facing evaluation researchers are resolved. However, there are certain difficulties inherent in the process of translating research into practice. These difficulties and the future directions of research related to young children are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

RESEARCH APPLICATIONS: CAUTIONS & CHALLENGES

The PGI faculty discussed not only ways in which research can be applied but also the challenges inherent in applying empirical findings to practice and the caution necessary in using research to justify particular programs or policies. These challenges and cautions are the focus of the first part of this chapter. The rest of the chapter deals with the challenge faced by researchers to develop an empirical knowledge base which is faithful to the complexity of early development and which can effectively guide child care and education practices. Central to the development of this knowledge base is a growing awareness of the complex "ecology" of human development; this awareness, according to the faculty, may be the solution to the challenge.

CAUTION -- TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

Difficulties exist at every stage of the process of applying research, from the interpretation of the results of relevant studies to the training of personnel to carry out the applications. These latter "practical problems" in the translation process from lab to field (or from researcher with 10 paid assistants to an understaffed day care program) were emphasized, as was the great care necessary to interpret research results accurately and thereby know precisely what it is that is being applied.

Practical Concerns

Steven Asher described his own work as "applied," in that he focuses on the practical problem of teaching social skills to school-aged children. Still, at the time of the interview, Asher

was more interested in finding out what kinds of social skills children should be taught and how they should be taught than in implementing widely the strategies he has developed. He did, however, hint at the implementation problems he would likely face (see also Horowitz's point regarding the wide variation in the implementation of empirically validated preschool programs in Chapter 7):

> Even if we were to find that our research had validated some very effective teaching procedures from which children benefitted enormously, there would be questions about how these procedures would be disseminated and used by people more broadly. If children are to be taught social skills, who should do the teaching -- the classroom teacher, a paraprofessional, the school psychologist, the school social worker? Who is best equipped to do these things? How will the teaching procedures be used? What provisions will be made and what resources will be necessary? How much priority shall we give this program in relation to others? Is it more desirable to work with individual children outside of the classroom or to have this instruction go on as part of the curriculum for all? There are a number of such issues related to translating from research results which show that it is possible to train social skills to the actual implementation of these procedures in the classroom.

With these concerns in mind, Asher emphasized that the implementation process should be carried out cautiously:

> It would be premature for our research team to engage in widespread applicaton of our work. We could suggest that if one taught a prescribed set of skills, children might be helped. However, the effects of any instruction will vary depending on the structure and organization of the classroom and the age and structure of the children's peer group. Unless we have some understanding of the way in which different skills interact with different kinds of social contexts, we are going to have people teaching a lot of stuff that probably is not harmful but perhaps is inappropriate. It is likely that people will get discouraged with the

lack of consistent results, and the program will become another of America's short-lived educational fads. I personally am happy to see us approach the disseminating of our programs slowly.

Joseph Stevens was asked about this problem of accurately and faithfully implementing empirically validated techniques, strategies, and programs. His interest in the "diffusion" of parent education program effects provoked a question about the danger of "a little bit of knowledge." In response, Stevens agreed that there may be some real dangers in possessing only a little bit of knowledge, but he argued that there also are some situations in which a little knowledge can go a long way:

> Levenstein, Gordon, Golke, Sandler and others who have worked with non-professionals or paraprofessionals in certain kinds of situations have found that non-professionals are really no different when well-trained, no less effective in transmitting parenting information to parents, than professionals.

Interpreting Research With Caution

Several faculty members pointed out that results of research studies (which are often flawed in design and implementation) are rarely clear cut, can usually be interpreted in different ways, and when compared are often ambiguous if not contradictory. Robert Granger and Rosalyn Rubin discussed the caution with which a "user" of research must interpret findings. Granger focused on the limitations of a single study, including the limited generalizations that can usually be made from a single study:

> I know that when I began to read research studies, I didn't understand many of the limitations that define most studies. Each study is done in a particular setting, each is done with particular measures of the constructs or processes of interest (e.g., we don't really directly measure self-concept, we measure it using a particular kind of instrument for measuring self-concept). The data gathered in any investigation is then filtered through the researcher's value system and his own assumptions about what he should be seeing

and what he thinks about what he is seeing. This typically is obscured in the discussion section of a research report.

Yet the view in many people's minds is that something done in one setting from one point of view and measured and interpreted in one way is something that generalizes far beyond this single research situation. There is clear danger in not recognizing that research is a value-laden enterprise which is limited in its nature, and that we need to have tremendous consensus across different settings and different groups and different designs before we can have really stable results in which we can have confidence.

The whole question then becomes the degree to which these results should translate into practice. One of the dangers in translating research into practice is that the less the research has been designed to ask questions that are practical in nature, the less likely it is to have direct applicability. Much research (and for very good reason) has been done more for the purpose of testing theory than to ask and answer very pragmatic kinds of questions. And so it's like taking a set of findings that were developed for one purpose and applying them to other purposes. I think we'll get farther if we think of applying the findings of evaluation research, policy study -- the pragmatic sorts of research -- to practice than we will if we try to apply the results of research that's been done to test and build theories.

Rubin's target was the problem that practitioners face in trying to use findings from research in which groups are studied (e.g., one group receives a particular intervention and a second group receives another or none at all) in making decisions about appropriate programming for individual children:

I think of the kind of studies in which people would contrast two sets of textbooks and find that students using textbook A performed better than those using textbook series B, and then would decide that every body should use textbook A. Even though the average dif-

ference may be in favor of A, there may be a number of individual students who did better on B. Also, you can't necessarily generalize from one particular school or school district to another. Whenever findings of that sort are published there is a danger that somebody who wants to sell textbooks will say that A is better --that all kids should have A.

The same is true about comparisons of open schools and traditional schools. Research results which suggest that a number of children perform better in a certain kind of school such as open school are often cited by advocates of open schools and misinterpreted to mean that all children should be in a open school setting, that that's ideal for everyone.

I believe that there are vast individual differences, and that we would never find any one system that would be optimal for all children, whether it's the textbook that's used, or the age at which you introduce a certain curriculum.

The Temptation to Overstate the Case

Henry Ricciuti and Frances Horowitz shared a concern that, given political and financial pressures, advocates of a program or policy often represent research results as being clear cut when they are not and as being more broadly generalizable than prudence would dictate. (See Chapter 7 for related discussion regarding the justification of continued support for early intervention programs.) Ricciuti stated the basic problem and went on to cite an area of his own research as an example where the political and financial dangers of "overstating the case" were in play:

It is very important to build appropriate bridges between the empirical knowledge of development and the design of programs and policies affecting young children. We have a tendency to overinterpret or to overstate our findings in terms of their generalizability and the confidence that we have in their validity. We do that because we're concerned that if we keep talking about how ambiguous the findings are, we will

weaken the likelihood of getting useful programs under way.

For example, possible overestimation of the direct effects of malnutrition on intellectual development led people in the late '60s and '70s to argue strongly for better nutritional programs. However, subsequent research has led us to conclude that it is difficult to estimate the independent role of malnutrition on intellectual development because usually where you have malnutrition, you also have unfavorable school environments and unfavorable socio-economic circumstances.

In the early '70s a number of very large scale nutritional supplementation studies were undertaken, particularly in Latin America, with heavy American financial support. The aim was to determine whether providing nutritional supplementation to children would enhance their intellectual development. I think that the general results of these studies were not very supportive of the point of view that supplementation has such an effect. And when you think about it, we should not expect that simply providing somewhat better nutritional status for children without at the same time improving other aspects of their environment would have that much of an effect.

So, currently researchers are reassessing the role of malnutrition in intellectual development, giving greater recognition to the importance of the interrelationships between nutritional factors and other aspects of child care and home circumstances. This entire set of factors is now viewed as requiring some remediation rather than focusing on nutrition alone. One of the reasons that people have found it difficult to accept such negative findings about the effects of malnutrition on intelligence is that they feel such findings would weaken their case for good nutrition programs in Congress. But I would argue that overstating one's case may do just as much harm to those programs in the long run.

Horowitz offered another example of the danger involved in overstating the case -- in presenting findings as more valid, clear cut, and wide reaching than they really are:

> Sometimes the need for doing something to help people is so great that people grab onto research results and apply them in a way that reflects ignorance about development as a whole. An example related to social attachment and bonding involves a hospital in New York with a ward of poor black babies whose single parents are going back into ghetto situations. The hospital personnel said to an individual visiting the hospital, "We allow social bonding. We allow the mothers to have immediate access to their babies, and, of course, since we do that these babies are going to be all right." It is naive and simplistic to conclude that if you permit early social contact all of the other problems that these families have will magically disappear and that these children are not going to remain at risk.
>
> Because we are so desperate for solutions, we tend to over-apply some kinds of data in practical situations. I find that when I talk publicly about intervention programs I qualify everything 30,000 times until I can't even identify the beginning of the sentence because I am concerned that some newspaper reporter will recount something that is a misinterpretation of the data. On one hand, we really want to say that research ideas are applicable, but on the other hand, we want to be very careful that people don't apply ideas wholesale before we have enough data to back them up.

In light of these concerns, Ricciuti advised that researchers must be careful to clarify (and perhaps separate) their dual roles:

> As scientists we try to interpret empirical results and indicate the confidence which we have in our findings. As social advocates, we have a vested interest in those policies and programs we believe will improve child care and optimize development. It is when we mix these roles

of scientist and social advocate that we sometimes get into difficulty.

CHALLENGE -- DEVELOPING AN "ECOLOGICALLY VALID" KNOWLEDGE BASE

When asked about future directions in early childhood development and education, several of our interviewees chose to address the future directions of developmental and educational research activity. They talked about the kind of knowledge which is needed in these domains and how it may be generated. For these researchers, the major concern for the future was the development of an appropriate knowledge base to serve as a foundation for the guidance of early development, care, and education.

The most frequently cited new direction in the development of this knowledge base is the study of the functions of the larger contexts in which children develop. Research from an "ecological perspective" was advocated as the way to begin to understand the child's developing interactions with and accommodations to his/her environment. The ecological perspective suggests that children develop within several "systems," each one embedded within a larger system. For example, the child develops as a physical system, within a parent(s)/child system, within a family and extended family system, within a neighborhood system, within a social system of work, child care, etc.. All of these systems influence and are influenced by each other. Research that focuses only on the individual child as s/he responds in a research laboratory (as was typical of research on child development for many years) or only on the mother/child dyad can in no way do justice to the attempt to understand development in its various contexts. It has been said that much of this research lacks ecological validity. The key words here are "ecology," "system," "context," "network," "interrelationship;" each one refers in some way to the reality that individual life is not lived in a vacuum but is a vital part of the larger fabric of life. The study of this "fabric" is the future direction of the research proposed by the PGI faculty.

Research on Human Subjects -- An Aside

Before discussing the development of an ecologically-oriented knowledge base, we should consider an issue which Steven Asher

indicated was critical for an understanding of future research directions: the impact of rules regulating research on human subjects. Any proposed research with human beings must be approved by the "Human Subjects" committee of the researcher's college or university. For most research on children, parental permission must be gained for each child involved. Asher suggested that one of the effects of these regulations is that researchers might be choosing not to study issues that could be controversial. He indicated that in his view children would be the eventual losers from this kind of policy:

> The human subjects regulations have made us a lot more careful in making sure that we do indeed have consent at every step of the way for what we're doing, and that's very good. However, I think people have become unnecessarily cautious in some cases about what kinds of research they do. In some cases people are doing safe things, things that are low-risk in terms of possibly getting anybody upset, but which may not be necessarily the most significant kinds of research to be doing.
>
> A related problem is that schools are often reluctant to go about things if they're going to cause any kind of controversy. Even if one parent calls and complains or raises questions, it's quite possible that the principal is going to back off, saying, "Let's see if we can work around that or modify our procedures to satisfy that parent." It's interesting that one parent can have that kind of impact. I think such complaints are bolstered nowadays given the changes in policies regarding human subjects. It's much more likely that we're going to take those parents seriously. In some cases the way in which we accommodate to one opposing voice is a bit goofy.

A Focus On Systems And Environment

Despite these limitations, faculty were generally optimistic about future research. Henry Ricciuti summarized the "ecological direction" of current research in describing the study of how the family functions as a system and how the family interacts with

the larger systems that comprise its environment. He also emphasized the importance of this kind of knowledge as a basis for intervention:

> There is increasing concern about the way the family functions as a system, getting away from just parent/child interaction. We're looking more systematically at the way in which the family relates to the larger social environment -- the neighborhood, the school, and the social and political ideology of the larger social ecology. My colleague, Urie Bronfenbrenner, has talked very forcefully about the need to do this, and we can see this beginning to happen in a lot of places.
>
> People are looking at the way in which available support systems in the environment facilitate the family's capacity to deal productively with children. Mavis Hetherington's recent study of the impact of divorce on children makes it very clear that one of the most important factors which determines how the mother and child cope with the immediate stress is the attitude of the father. If he's present as a supporting figure and doesn't contribute to conflict between child and mother, things go a lot better. Or, if there are other informal supports available to the mother and child during the period of time, this makes a big difference. So the availability of both informal and formal support systems to single parents, to employed parents, and to adolescent parents are being looked at very carefully, and I think we will learn some very important things about how best to help create and sustain environments that are developmentally supportive.

A difficult challenge to researchers conducting "ecological" investigations is to describe adequately the environments in which children develop. Ricciuti discussed this challenge and the importance, again, of accurate descriptions for helpful intervention:

> We're making very serious efforts to understand the specific features of early developmental environments which are either supportive or not supportive of development.

> Until relatively recently we've tended to think about environments in very gross terms like income level, educational level of the parent, etc.. We know now that even among low income families (and this is dramatically illustrated in some of the Latin American work) there's tremendous variability in conditions of living and in the family's capacity to cope with adversity. The same is true with middle income families. We're beginning to take very seriously the importance of characterizing more adequately the most salient features of children's environments. Bettye Caldwell's work was very important in showing that you can actually find significant variations within SES groups that relate to later development. We'll see more of this, and we'll better understand what features of the child's early experience are really important. This will help us in terms of facilitating the maintenance of such environments.

Joseph Stevens offered an example from his own experience of a research question which involves the study of environments and interrelated social networks:

> I think we're going to be more concerned about looking at parent education programs and early childhood programs from an ecological perspective, looking wholistically at interventions in terms of the way they impact the environment that does not necessarily include the families. For example, one of the kinds of things that got me involved in looking at social networks (and the impact that social networks have on supporting or inhibiting child rearing information) was looking at programs where parents are in a group training situation versus programs that utilize individual consultation with parents. I wondered whether or not group programs are more likely than the individual programs to enable support networks to be established which sustain the changes that occur in parent behavior.

Stevens explained that as educational programs themselves begin to emphasize the importance of influencing the systems in which the child is embedded, research must keep up by trying to determine the effects of programs on these larger systems. In this sense, the ecological perspective is required not only of

research on the developing child but of the research that aims to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of programs.

Robert Granger not only cited the need for new ways to study the complexity of the social fabric but also suggested that by definition this research must reach across professional disciplines:

> One of the new directions in the social sciences will be to try to develop methodologies with which to understand the complexity of social interaction. We're going to see an increased attempt to try and understand things from an ecological perspective.
>
> Another thing that is needed, due to the way disciplines develop their own narrow blinders about the nature of problems, the nature of science, and the nature of inquiry, is much more encouragement for across-discipline collaboration. We're currently seeing this in the relationships among anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and educators. For a period of time we saw it between psychologists and educators. More recently psychologists are being acculturated by anthropologists and vice versa. I hope in the future that funding agencies and people who are charting directions for inquiry will almost force this kind of collaboration to occur. A recent call for research proposals put out by the March of Dimes demanded collaborations between physicians and psychologists for a proposal to be considered. That is the kind of thing I hope will continue to occur.

Cultural Context

One important aspect of the study of environment or context is, of course, the study of cultural context. Asher and Horowitz indicated that progress will come in many areas of developmental research as we begin to understand behavior within its cultural context(s). Horowitz offered an example from the study of language development:

> Another future direction relating to language will be the development of a deeper understanding and appre-

ciation of language in various cultural and subcultural contexts. Some people I know have been doing some research in poor, black homes. If you took a transcript of what the mother said to her child and asked a group of middle class people to evaluate it, the evaluation would be very negative. Indeed, the mother says things like, "Oh, he's a bad boy, he's a real naughty one." Well, it turns out that those are all statements of endearment. Those are positive statements. For another example, mothers say, "Oh boy, is he ugly." That, in some cultures, is a positive statement derived from some kind of superstition about saying too many words that have nice meaning because then you attract the devil. There are some very interesting aspects of the mind-sets that parents have about their children, and if you don't understand the culture out of which they come, their statements are easy to misinterpret.

Asher gave another example from the study of the development of peer relationships:

The whole question of social and cultural contexts is obviously becoming more salient to us as we think about educational programming for kids of different minority groups, of different social classes, of different cultures. Moving out of the laboratory has been necessary for developmental psychologists to do, and it's really exposed us to diversity and to the difficulties in generalizing our findings to different groups. Certainly in the peer relations area, this is going to be the focus of some major questions. How are peer groups in different cultures organized? Is it the case that particular social skills are going to be important across cultures? -- probably not. How do children come to "psych-out" the environments in which they live? We don't really know much about the process of how they do that -- how they accommodate themselves to different cultural contexts. This is an issue of social or cultural sensitivity which will be an increasing theme or issue for us for quite some time. Some of this is encouraged, of course, by policy questions -- attention to racial integration and the education of minority kids.

Interacting Domains of Development

Besides recognizing the influences of interacting systems in a child's environment, the development of our knowledge base requires a recognition of the interaction between various "areas" or domains of development. Granger and Asher pointed to the importance of understanding how cognition interacts with social behavior and, more generally, how cognitive development relates to social development. Asher emphasized the need to study the reciprocal influences between social and cognitive factors:

> People are becoming more and more interested in how cognitive development and social development interface. We often divide the world up into the world of reading and the world of social skills, the world of cognitive development and of affective development, etc.. One of the exciting things that's happening is that people seem to be getting past that notion. People studying cognitive development realize that social variables, motivational processes, personality variables, peer relationships, and teacher-student interaction all influence children's academic achievement. On the other hand, the people who are doing the social and affective work are increasingly realizing the influence of cognitive processes in social behavior, be it attributional processes or the ability to cognitively represent another person's viewpoint.
>
> I think this integration of social and cognitive development is very important, and I think it will become an important issue for preschool teachers. I think they, maybe even more than we as researchers, have been guilty of this carving the world up into affective domains and cogitive domains, of thinking of things in those terms. Hopefully, we can begin to influence some thinking in this area.

Granger discussed the challenge of understanding how children experience or think about social situations, an understanding which obviously cannot be gained by studying only observable behavior:

I think we'll see movement from simple empirical models toward studies that are more phenomenological in nature. Probably there will be a lot more work done from what's called a "constructivist" position, which simply is doing research at something deeper than the surface structure level -- research that takes into account the fact that people think. As silly as that sounds, most of the research that we have done does not entertain the reality that people think about the things that they're going to do. We have attributed less thought processes to ourselves than to the animals that we have studied. And so I think that the social sciences will focus more on the meaning that participants are constructing in social settings than simply on the behavior of those people.

Individual Differences

Much of the emphasis in the above discussion is on the study of environments in which children and families develop. However, the focus of ecological investigations is properly on the interaction of the individual with his/her environment, or on the adaptation of the individual to the environment. Horowitz and Ricciuti discussed their interest in studying the individual differences in the ways in which children and their families adapt to their environments. Horowitz focused on the need for short-term longitudinal studies (which follow the same subjects over a limited time period) to investigate these individual differences:

I see important future directions in the study of individual differences -- in trying to get a better description of individual differences as they determine which kinds of environment will be most effective for different kinds of children. The implication of this, however, is that the direction is going to be toward much more difficult research. It will be hard for doctoral students to get a clean dissertation problem out of it because the measures are going to be complicated.

I think short-term longitudinal studies are going to become increasingly necessary to see how the functions work out and where the major transitional cutting

points are. I'm talking about taking measures very early and maybe going through the first year or two years. I don't mean longitudinal studies from birth to twenty -- I think that's premature at this point, although there's something to be learned from it. But I think looking over longer spans of time than just one evaluation and being able to follow a population for at least a little bit in time -- I think that's one of the future directions.

Ricciuti's focus was on the "individual differences" between families that determine the degree of success of their adaptation to their environment:

I am interested in the questions of how to identify the particular strengths in families that lead them to be less vulnerable to terribly stressful conditions and also the nature of the vulnerabilities of other families who can't cope. Answers to these questions will not only give us added understanding of an important set of problems, but if we want to reach families through intervention, and we can't reach everybody, then we ought to be able to identify those families who are at greatest risk or in greatest need.

We need to talk about invulnerable families as well as the so-called "invulnerable children" who are being studied today. As yet we don't understand this. When I was in a village in Guatemala, for example, some babies were brought in for us to look at. One baby looked fantastic and I said, "Gee, this is an unusually great baby. Which family does this baby come from?" It turned out that the father of this baby was one of the more enterprising people in the town. He raised tomatoes rather than beans because tomatoes provided a more lucrative crop. He made special efforts to get his wife to the hospital to have her baby in Guatemala City. In other words, he had a lot more going for him.

Another man had the only TV set in town and earned extra money by bringing in people to watch TV on Saturday night. Within that very poor population there were some families that were really "making it" under

pretty poor conditions. Others were simply not making it. And so I think that this search for information about what puts a family at great risk or what it is that enables one family to cope better than another is something that is going to be very helpful.

Whether emphasizing individual differences or aspects of the environment more heavily, Horowitz and Ricciuti agreed with the rest of the PGI faculty that the proper focus of ecologically oriented research is on the interactions and transactions between humans and their various "real life" environments. The increasing quantity and quality of research with such a focus suggests that as the ability to interpret and apply research improves, an increasingly useful base of knowledge will be available to the practitioner and the policy maker.

Chapter Seven

POLICY ISSUES

The PGI faculty addressed a wide variety of issues relating to federal, state, and local policies, including laws, regulations, agency requirements, guidelines, and funding decisions that affect young children. Discussions focused on who should serve the preschooler, policy related to day care for infants and young children, and justifying continued federal support of early intervention programs for children who are handicapped or "at risk" for developmental problems. These topics are considered one-by-one, although they are linked by their relation to the politics involved in financial and legislative support of services for young children.

In discussing public policy most of the faculty emphasized the powerful impact that P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) is having on the lives of young children. Because the "least restrictive environment" provision of this law was the focus of so much discussion, it is presented as a separate chapter ('Mainstreaming'); P.L. 94-142 is thus touched on only lightly here, even though it would ordinarily be a key topic in a discussion of current policy in early education. Also, as general issues regarding the relations between research and public policy were considered in chapters 5 and 6, the impact of research on policy will be considered in this chapter only in terms of specific findings and particular policy decisions.

WHO SHOULD SERVE THE PRESCHOOLER?

Interlocking Systems

One aspect of the question "Who should be responsible for the care and education of the preschool child?" that the PGI faculty considered was the role of early childhood education in

relation to other systems and subsystems that operate in this country. The arena of early education borders and often overlaps the territory of various systems that directly serve young children and their families, e.g., the medical system and the social welfare system. As part of the enormous educational system, early childhood education is also in many respects interconnected with larger political and economic systems. Robert Granger and Donald Stedman suggested that the domain of early education is as yet poorly mapped and sometimes conflicts with these other service systems, resulting in poorly coordinated care for the young child and in ineffective advocacy for early childhood education. In this light, Stedman deplored what he called an inter-professional struggle over the "ownership" of the preschooler:

> One thing that especially aggravates me is the struggle that you see at the local level between health, education, and social service professionals over who "owns" the preschooler. There are still some kinds of protective points of view on the part of disciplines, but it simply is not true that pediatricians own the toddler population any more than it's true that educators own them. Their parents "own" them. And yet you see these tug-of-wars over budgets, licensing, supervision, or who's got to be present when you do this or that. It's ridiculous. I think if you get into life or death situations like drug prescriptions or things like that, then you ought to yield to who's competent; but simply dividing up children on the basis of some diploma seems to me to be rather archaic and obsolete.

Granger focused on the failure of the early education "establishment" to define its identity:

> What the early educational establishment hasn't done is to figure out how early childhood education relates to the economic system, political system, legal system, the welfare system, or even the public education system. We've drawn our boxes nicely in order to help us develop our positive identity and remain psychologically distinct from all these other "evil" forces. But we do not understand how we might begin to break down some of these divisions and build relations with other systems.

> The early childhood education establishment has assumed that its function is solely educational, and it hasn't recognized that early childhood education has many functions and should create relationships with other systems as well.

Public Vs. Private Delivery Of Preschool Education

The second aspect of the question, "Who should serve the preschooler," that our interviewees discussed was whether the public schools or the private sector should be the major provider of preschool education. The answer which emerged from our interviews was clearly, "Not the public schools." Frances Horowitz summarized the general rationale for this answer:

> Many people involved with early education have been concerned about keeping it out of the public school systems because public schools may just put the template of the elementary ed/kindergarten teacher on the preschool, and thus will perpetuate all the bad things about elementary school and none of the good things about the preschools.

Mary Lane indicated the need for alternatives to public schools in the education of preschool-aged children:

> I would hate to see all of the money (for preschool education) given to the public schools because so many parents, especially in the poverty group, have such antagonistic attitudes toward them that I think it would be very difficult to get parents to feel friendly about turning over their three-year-olds to the public schools. There should be many other options available to parents.

Lane's emphasis on ensuring that parents feel comfortable in the school setting is rooted in her conviction that parents should play central roles in making decisions about their children's education. She expanded on her notion of parent involvement, in which she envisions creation of community schools where parents and children alike are free to share the schools. She fears that this sense of community may not develop for many people in poverty if they must send their young children to the public schools:

I would hope that local groups really get behind the national push for parent participation in developing policy for education of children -- that it ceases to be just a token but becomes a real, vital thing. We could develop what are known as community schools with a lot of parent participation. Stop and think how many hours of the year our schools are empty and how much need there is for people to find places to drop in to chat, to use the equipment to build skills in such things as woodworking, cooking, sewing, etc. Although greater use would be hard on the equipment -- some would get broken -- we should somehow be able to find a way to support that kind of activity so that people could use their schools as centers to really enrich the community. You could look at almost any neighborhood in San Francisco and not see any influence of the school; there should be all sorts of expressions of the life of the school visible in the community.

The concern, expressed by Lane, that certain elements of the population would not thrive in public preschool programs was echoed by Horowitz. However, while Lane spoke of the distrust of the public school by people in poverty, Horowitz emphasized the inappropriateness of using the public school model or "template" for educating all our preschool children:

Public schools have been most successful with children who come to school prepared to do what the school expects of them, and they've been least successful with the rest of the population. This is, of course, to the great detriment of our society, because failure in school -- in terms of learning to read and write -- just sets you on a course that is likely to keep you in the poverty class for the rest of your life. I would hate to see the areas in which the public schools have succeeded the least now be imposed upon preschool children. This is not to say that the public schools are entirely responsible for their failures; they weren't set up to deal with the problems of disorganized families and underfed children, so I don't want to overblame the public schools. But I think that taking the model of the public school to do early childhood education is a

mistake. This is especially true if the rationale for early childhood education is to prevent educational problems later on. Using the elementary school model would ensure that the kids who do well in early childhood education are the kids that the school would succeed with anyway, and it would not help the children with whom the school would probably not succeed.

The question of the public schools' responsibility for the education of handicapped preschoolers was addressed by Samuel Meisels and Maynard Reynolds. In many states, the public schools have begun to serve handicapped four-year-olds (and younger children in some states), mostly in segregated special education preschools. Given the mandate to educate children with special needs in the least restrictive environment, Meisels and Reynolds questioned this public school service delivery system.

Reynolds raised a variety of questions about this situation, in which the requirement to serve young handicapped children is a public requirement, yet the educational facilities for preschoolers are generally private. The problem is how best to work out this marriage between public mandate and private educational resources:

> There are important questions about program development and organization. An obvious one is to what extent we are going to proceed with early education in the private community as against developing public programs. To what extent is it appropriate to seek to accomplish the expanding public purposes that are specified for this field through the utilization of private resources? Can we build a movement for standards in early childhood education to protect quality? Can we do that more efficiently through private organizations, through public organizations, or through some combination? How can we create broader preschool programs so that we meet the least restrictive alternative or the mainstreaming mandate for those who have special needs?
>
> There is a public requirement now that we get started earlier if at all possible with handicapped children and that we do it in environments that also include nonhandicapped children. If we've got a public

obligation to serve the handicapped, are we going to do that in private facilities? There just aren't enough programs out there now to make the mainstreaming mandates possible. How are we going to deal with that?

In response to Reynolds' questions, Meisels argued that public schools should provide support for the education of handicapped children in private early education settings:

> We are already seeing preschools being started in public school settings. Most of those preschools are homogenous (segregated special education classes) and largely dysfunctional because the majority of those children need to be, not just could be, but need to be in regular classrooms. Somehow we've got to start making trouble for the public schools that are doing that. Should they start an integrated program themselves by enrolling a certain percentage of nonhandicapped children? No! This is a time to use the existing service facilities and maximize the resources by having the public school person go out and give training and support to the private sector.

Public Preschool Education For Every Child

Whereas P.L. 94-142 mandates that three- and four-year-old handicapped children be offered a free public education (unless an existing state law contravenes), there is no such mandate in most states to educate preschool children without any apparent special needs. While many early education supporters and activists are currently supporting efforts for public funding of preschool education, Frances Horowitz is concerned about this trend. She pointed to the danger of looking to early education as a cure for social problems and, like Mary Lane in this chapter (and several others in this volume), suggested that preschool education should be only one of several options for parents of young children to choose from:

> The thing I fear the most is that public school education for all young children will be seen as a panacea the way Head Start was, and when it does not have the expected effect, there will seem to be a reason to discontinue it. There are many reasons for doing

preschool education, not the least of which is to provide good quality day care as one of several alternatives for families in which both parents work.

Do we want to provide preschool education for everybody? I'm not entirely sure that preschool education in groups for every child is necessarily good. From an economic point of view, home day care is probably much more feasible than preschool care. It would be nice for communities to have four or five alternatives available for any family and then let the family choose the alternative that best fits their lifestyle and their values.

I would not advocate incorporation of preschool into public school sytems and certainly would not advocate mandatory preschool for all children. I think it's a matter of personal choice, with some exceptions. There are families with very high stress levels so that getting kids out of the house is very important, for the kids and for the mothers. Then, of course, some kind of day care is necessary. So the policies have to be variable and fit the needs of different families and different kinds of communities.

DAY CARE POLICY

The fact is that many young children must be cared for outside of the home for at least part of the day. Henry Ricciuti and Robert Granger each spoke extensively about day care, specifically about the regulations and funding policies related to child care services. The recently released Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements were the topic of much of our discussion.

Effects Of Infant Day Care

When the federal day care requirements were being revised in the late 1970s, Henry Ricciuti was asked to review the relevant research on the effects of infant day care on young children and their families for the Office of Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He was asked to be especially alert for evidence of possible negative effects of group care on a child's subsequent development. Child develop-

ment professionals and governing agencies were concerned that infants in group day care may be deprived of opportunities for optimum learning and intellectual development. Concern was even stronger that group care may have a negative impact on a child's social development, particularly on the development of relations within the family and especially on the attachment bond between mother and child. Ricciuti summarized his findings in our discussion and indicated their relevance to funding and policy issues. These findings are a good example of the kind of research evidence that is considered in the formulation of public policy. Ricciuti's care in qualifying the findings he reports is exemplary. While his review is generally supportive of infant day care, as there is little evidence of negative effects and some of positive effects at least for some children, Ricciuti was quick to point out that results from infant care centers which are not as well funded as the ones that have been studied may not be so impressive:

> It's pretty clear that there is no evidence of any adverse effects on young children's intellectual development. However, I should immediately follow that statement with the warning that most of the research that has been done on this question has been conducted in model demonstration centers which are well funded and which are university affiliated. The centers are licensed, supervised, and have favorable staff-child ratios. There are, however, situations where care outside of the home is poorly funded and not optimal for children. We need to be concerned about this because, as common sense tells us, there is some risk to development if you have very, very poor conditions.
>
> A doctoral student at a university in northern Florida studied a number of very isolated, poor, rural day care centers for infants in which the staff-child ratio was often 1:14. Although not a particularly strong study methodologically, it is interesting to note that when children in these centers were compared with home-reared kids in the same region, the center kids did a little worse than the home-reared kids. This was one of the few studies which reported possible negative effects of group care. So I think we can say that group care need not have a negative effect on children, but we

do need to be concerned about the quality of the center. As funds shrink, and the demand for day care continues to increase, we may be confronting a situation where it is going to be harder to buy good quality care for infants.

While there is little evidence of negative effects, it is equally hard to demonstrate positive effects of day care on intellectual development, except for those children whose home environments presum ably are not as capable of sustaining adequate development. If you were to look at data on children whose home environments were capable of fostering normal development, you would not see any impressive or even significant gains from day care. But if you were to look at the programs for "high risk" children, children from very low income homes whom you would expect to be less competent than average at three or four years of age, it is a somewhat different story; some intellectual gains at least during the time the children were in preschool or shortly thereafter have been demonstrated. And in a way this is not a surprising set of findings, because most day care is not aimed specifically at enhancing intellectual development but is concerned with providing good quality care outside of the home. These programs are not designed as remedial or corrective experiences.

On the other hand, I think that people have underestimated the benefits of group care to the child and to the family in the area of social development. In any good day care center which serves infants and toddlers the amount of social interaction that is observable is really very surprising. The old textbooks talked about social interaction beginning around the age of 2½, but in infant day care settings you see a lot of social interchange taking place. There is evidence that children who have this kind of experience adapt more readily to new situations, to new social demands that are placed on them with other people or in different settings.

Again, standards must be considered. In centers where financial resources are limited, emphasis is often

placed on using volunteers because there is little money for permanent staff. I would argue that a center should have stable care-givers who like their work and who want to keep their jobs a long time. But this means that salaries must keep increasing, and this is a great concern of the day care provider. If you try to cut costs by depending more and more on volunteers, you can create a situation in which a child feels less secure than he needs to feel during this critical period in the first few years of life. This could lead to some undesirable consequences in terms of the child's development of trust and confidence in adults. This is something to be concerned about particularly when there are limited economic resources. People must make arrangements for the care of babies, and I suspect that without support for child care we will be finding more and more situations where the day care experience will not be what we would like it to be.

Federal Support For Quality Care

Ricciuti's findings are indeed encouraging to those involved in providing high quality group care to infants and young children, yet his conclusions regarding the potential consequences of limited funding are sobering. Child care advocates in the United States, however, are no strangers to the frustrations that result from seeing evidence suggesting that well supported child care outside the home is not harmful and may be beneficial and also seeing that adequate support is yet to be supplied. Mary Lane spoke of the frustration of knowing that "if we really wanted to" we could appropriately fund early education and child care:

> I think the percentage of our budget that goes into education and child care is a national disgrace. I have very little patience with people who say, "But we can't afford it." We afford what we value. We always have and I think we always will.

It was on the lack of federal support for day care that Granger focused when asked to discuss significant federal policy affecting youngsters:

The question is more interesting when you think of what hasn't happened and the consequences of things not happening. Certainly we don't have any wide-spread public support or public policy to indicate that child care is an important enterprise and that society is supporting it in a substantive way. When we talk about the impact of public policy on children, we are talking more about errors of omission than commission. A perfect example is the continued failure of the federal government to enact any sort of national legislation which truly supports day care. Another example would be the omission in the current federal standards of any kind of qualification standards for people who work with children.

Also there are no economic incentives or other forms of support for day care people to develop their skills through training. It seems to me that this lack of policy in the educational arena is dramatically impacting the quality of care for kids before they get into the public schools where we have the traditional funding sources.

Although obviously not impressed by policy which has been generated so far, Granger expressed optimism that the time is ripe to make important changes in federal day care policy:

Though early childhood organizations have not been very active in trying to effect legislation, perhaps the CDA Consortium, which includes all the major early child care and development associations, can be the potential power base to help formulate policy.

With the support of a well organized consortium, Granger was optimistic about the issue of legislating quality of care because, as he pointed out, no one really opposes quality care. Given that some care outside the home is necessary, the issue of quality is hardly debatable; who would advocate low quality care?:

I don't see "competent" care of children as a political issue. I see care of children as a highly political issue, but when you speak to people from the full

spectrum of political views, whether or not they agree on the need for care, they would all agree that the care should be good.

Granger pointed out that the new Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements do not strongly and directly specify standards of quality, but rather the quantitative "indicators" of quality. It is obviously easier to set and enforce "countable" standards for "quantity of care" than descriptive standards for quality of care. Nonetheless, Ricciuti and Granger agreed that the new regulations should have very positive effects. As Ricciuti said:

> The proposed revision of the Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements represents a very important step forward. I feel that there is a role for the federal government in helping to promote high quality conditions of care that will meet the needs of families. This issue is somewhat controversial because many people question whether the government should be involved in trying to establish policy through federal requirements. I think that the proposed revisions can serve a very useful purpose, though it's true that meeting a requirement does not guarantee good care. Meeting minimal physical, safety, and health requirements obviously is something valid in its own right -- having a staff/child ratio of 1:4 or 5 gives you a better chance of having good care than if you have 1:20 -- but this doesn't guarantee the quality of the care. The next thing is to talk about the important issue of what sort of training the staff in day care centers should have, and the fact that the federal government has taken a fresh look at this is promising.

Asked how strong the proposed requirements really are, Ricciuti replied:

> You might think of the revisions as guidelines. They are not requirements; they can't all really be monitored. If they turn out even as strongly recommended guidelines they will be useful because they will sensitize people to those features of day care environments that we need to be concerned about if we're going to have high quality care.

The Economics Of Quality Care

One of the reasons that the federal guidelines tread lightly on quality issues is that higher quality means higher cost. Ricciuti described the financial constraints on policy requirements and the balance that needs to be achieved between provisions for quality child care and a reasonable budget:

> One of the things that has struck many of us as ironic is that in programs that are supported by federal, state, or local funds for families that are eligible for assistance, the actual cost of good care (especially for infants and toddlers) is very high. A minimal estimate is around $65.00 a week or so for about 35 hours a week of care. In our center in Ithaca we have a sliding fee scale, so few, if any, pay $65.00, and some people pay only $10.00 a week; but where no subsidy or sliding fee is available it is very expensive for parents.
>
> The policy people tell us that recommendations and regulations must provide for quality care but must be within economic reach. Making the group care requirements very rigid could price day care right out of business. In New York City, for example, because child care workers were unionized (earning not outlandish salaries but good living wages) the cost of infant day care went up to about $6,000 a year per child. As funds began to shrink, centers were closed and children began drifting out of center care into family day care.

Citing again an example from New York City, Ricciuti explained that the economics of infant day care presents even more difficult problems than does the funding of day care for older children:

> The New York City Day Care Council is trying to get various government agencies to approve paying a higher rate in family day care for infants and toddlers (comparable to that for handicapped children) on the grounds that 1) it takes more expertise to care for younger children and 2) you can't care for as many children under two years of age. The Council is working toward that end because many women prefer not to take

toddlers. They can make more money by taking older children or by avoiding licensing and taking as many children as they can get.

Along with several of the PGI faculty, Ricciuti agreed with the proposition that families should have several options for the care and education of their children and that federal policy (and money) should play a strong role in supporting these alternatives. He proposed one funding option which was both traditional and radical, and he was quick to point out that this option may not be readily and widely embraced:

> One option would be to make payments to families to help support children at home without requiring the mother to go to work. I think there is little difference between the government paying $6,000 a year per child in day care costs while the mother goes to work and the government offering financial help to the mother who doesn't want to go to work, but would provide care for her children at home. Our legislators seem to be very reluctant to support women who are staying home and taking care of their own children. It goes back, I think, to the stereotype of low income families as lazy and shiftless and not wanting to work. But I think that one of the options certainly ought to be support of child care at home. Whether this will ever be attained, I don't know.

JUSTIFYING AND SUPPORTING EARLY INTERVENTION

Interpreting The Persistent Effects

Along with the federal government's role in supporting day care for young children, our faculty members addressed the issue of continuing federal support for early intervention programs for handicapped and "at risk" youngsters. The focus of much of the discussion was the evidence presented in 1977 by the Consortium on Developmental Continuity (headed by Irving Lazar of Cornell University) which has suggested that Head Start programs produce some beneficial long term effects for the children involved.

Several earlier evaluations of Head Start programs indicated that the gains in IQ and achievement scores of preschoolers

fostered by educational intervention "washed out" by the time the children reached kindergarten or the early primary grades. The Consortium, however, reported that the positive effects of a good preschool experience show up in later school years. Contrasting the school careers through high school of preschool "graduates" with those of peers who had not attended preschool, the Consortium reported that graduates were (1) less likely to be retained in grade; (2) less likely to be placed in special education; and (3) likely to hold higher achievement expectations for themselves than their peers without the preschool experience.

It would be easy, on the basis of these promising results, to conclude that early intervention efforts should be expanded and that more money should be appropriated to support Head Start or similar programs for young children. Henry Ricciuti, Frances Horowitz, and Robert Granger, however, urged caution in interpreting the Consortium's findings and warned against prematurely using these findings as justification for a major expansion of intervention efforts in early childhood. While Horowitz and Ricciuti agreed that the findings were indeed impressive, they were concerned that the results may be overgeneralized to support the conclusion that <u>any</u> intervention project would have similar results. They also feared that overstating the case may lead to disappointment and withdrawal of government support for preschool programs.

Granger expressed the strongest concern about using these findings as evidence that programs should be supported. He questioned the basic strategy of trying, 12 to 16 years after the actual intervention, to sort out the factors that might account for fewer children being assigned to special classes (for example) and concluding that this is strongly a function of preschool experience. He concluded: "I understand that's probably necessary to justify intervention, but I don't think that it's really very productive. I wouldn't try to push it that far."

Horowitz, the co-author of an early review article (1973) on the effectiveness of environmental intervention, cautioned that, because the Consortium's results were based on studies of high quality, well funded programs, we cannot <u>necessarily</u> conclude that other preschool programs, which may be less well funded or directed, will have equally impressive long-term effects. She

spelled out the potential long-term political effects of making such an erroneous generalization:

> I think that the data are very provocative and interesting and certainly are reason to keep on looking into the effects of early education. It has to be remembered, however, that the programs which the Consortium reviewed were high quality, well funded experimental programs. There are some data from the Behavior Analysis Follow Through program at Kansas which say that the degree to which the teacher will participate in the program and actually do the curriculum prescribed by the program affects the outcome of the program. The data also suggest that when teachers know somebody is in their classroom taking data, monitoring their behavior (as was the case in these early intervention studies), they're much more likely to do the program that has been outlined. All of these projects were halo type projects; it was an honor to be in them, they were high powered, they were well known, they were very visible, and they were very well funded.
>
> If we're going to make a commitment to early childhood education as a social policy based on the Consortium's findings, my question is, are we going to make the commitment that was present in those programs in terms of the kinds of funding and the monitoring of effects? If not, if instead we do Head Start-type programs in which the quality is variable (sometimes very poor), then when somebody evaluates the persistent effects of these programs, they're not going to come out with the same results as the Consortium's. This could then become a political reason to discontinue the programs. So, unless the persistence of preschool effects is clearly qualified, we may face the prospect of having to argue the whole political issue again of whether early education makes any difference.

Henry Ricciuti stressed the danger of generalizing from these findings until we are able to explain the "sleeper" effect of the results, something which he has not found easy to do. He also recognized the nature of the political temptation to overgeneralize:

Before we can be very confident about using these data as a basis for programs, we have to be able to develop a reasonable explanation of those findings. Why should you not find results for four years and then suddenly find them? Irving Lazar, the chairman of the Consortium, believes that the results of these studies may be explained by the various effects that the intervention programs had on the parents and families. Maybe they now value education for their children more than they did before, and consequently the commitment to education is being reinforced. That's very probable.

This is a case where we must present the data and offer alternative explanations, look at it very hard, and try to replicate it without overstating it. When you press any of the people doing this research they're very open about this; but if someone is trying to use a set of findings to persuade congressmen (partly because congressmen don't want qualifications, they want to know "yes" or "no"), they are forced into a position where they must overgeneralize to make their point before they are absolutely sure about their findings.

This concern that we explain research results before they are used to justify increased funding for programs was also sounded by Horowitz. She, like Lazar, wondered whether the long-term effects of these Head Start programs may be more a function of the contact with parents than of the education of the children:

I think that the programs all had a fair amount of parent involvement. One of the results the Consortium reported was that the parents felt good about the programs and felt more competent in dealing with the school, and this may be where part of the effectiveness lies -- it may not be the programs per se that made any difference but rather the spin-off effects that they had on the families that participated in those programs. And that's very difficult to evaluate. I guess I'm afraid that the Consortium report will be overused as a rationale for a whole bunch of programs, which, when evaluated will not yield the same results, and then this will become a rationale for not doing such programs.

The Consortium, indeed, reported that parents were affected in positive ways by their children's (and their own) involvement in these early education programs. Joseph Stevens argued that one important effect of the parent involvement component of these programs has been that many low income parents have become politically empowered -- that is, they are much more effective at influencing the systems in which they live in directions which are consonant with their needs and desires. In turn, Stevens pointed out, these parents have forcefully affected the refunding of these programs by their skillful political activism. Research results such as the Consortium's will now be another tool in the hands of parents whose testimony so far has been persuasive:

> Observing the political phenomena that occur in programs like Head Start and Follow Through, one sees that the programs which survive, which continue to be funded, do so not so much because of the data that they have generated but because of the extent to which parents have been able to affect decision makers by saying "My child is getting something out of this." Those parents are empowered and are able to exert appropriate pressure in appropriate places, and policy makers and legislators continue to respond to that kind of pressure.

The Effectiveness Of Early Special Education

While the Consortium's report lent strength to the proposition that preschool education makes a difference for so-called "disadvantaged" children, the effects are by no means clear cut. Similarly, there is disagreement among parents and professionals as to the value of early intervention programs for handicapped children. Many of the Head Start programs were undertaken as experimental projects in which the preschool (and later) performance of the Head Start children was compared with that of similar children without the Head Start experience. However, this has not always been the case with preschool programs for handicapped children. We have for several years tended to assume that beginning early with handicapped children is a good idea, but there has been no overwhelmingly convincing research data generated to validate this proposition, nor do we have the data to suggest that one kind of program or intervention is superior to another. This is especially true for programs that have

served children with mild developmental delays or children who are expected to have later problems. (See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the problems of prediction.)

Rosalyn Rubin called our attention to the lack of data about what interventions work or which work best. She suggested that new programs be approached cautiously and experimentally:

> We tend to assume that we know what's the correct kind of intervention program to keep these children from having problems. But we don't really know enough at this point. Now this doesn't mean that we shouldn't be trying programs, but they should all be conducted as pilot studies or experimental programs -- nothing should be etched in stone at this point.
>
> We have to be very careful when we start these kinds of programs. Whenever possible, there ought to be control groups. I realize that that is contrary to general public policy and that people whose children don't get into special programs may react with the feeling that they are being discriminated against by not being allowed to participate in something which might be beneficial. We should be honest with parents and acknowledge that what we are trying to do is find the best way to help children develop optimally. But we don't really know exactly how to do that at this point.

Donald Stedman, however, voiced his long held conviction that programs for young children with special needs should begin as early as possible. He cautioned, though, that early services must be coordinated with later ones and described the challenge therein:

> If you're going to do something for the large masses of kids, then the most profitable strategy is a very heavy concentration on one developmental period and the earlier the better. I've felt this way since 1960, but it's not a very popular or practical point of view because you simply cannot load all of your budgetary resources or all of your personnel in any one developmental period. By definition you then leave out others and have to shift your balance. So, before we do that,

I think we ought to lay at least one set of tracks across the first twenty-one years for large numbers of severely and moderately handicapped young people, and then concentrate on a more preventive strategy.

Stedman also predicted that the future will bring intervention efforts focused on earlier and earlier developmental periods. He also hinted at the implication of this trend for the question of who should serve the preschooler:

I think we'll go lower and lower on the age scale. We'll get more and more into infant programming, emphasizing mostly language and cognitive development as opposed to affective development. There are problems of evaluation and lack of adequate support for programs dealing with the affective areas. So we'll probably stay with the heavy cognitive emphasis but move it farther down the age scale. Working with "six-monthers" and "three-monthers" will cause more collisions among disciplines; we'll start colliding with the obstetricians, I suppose.

While parents of handicapped children have been extraordinarily effective advocates of early intervention, Stedman pointed out that some parents of handicapped children, especially older ones, view early education programs suspiciously. As a strong supporter of intervention as early as possible, Stedman explained how he deals with such parents:

Many families of handicapped children view early education as a prevention strategy and a way to fatten up the available services earlier, but not as one that is going to help them directly. In talking directly with those parents, I try to suggest that they don't have to make a choice, that it isn't an "either-or" situation. It's a matter of figuring out access to resources. So if they have a seventeen-year-old child and the fundamental problem now is community adjustment or vocational placement, this doesn't mean they can't support early education on behalf of other parents or on behalf of subsequent kids they might have.

Federal Support Of Special Services

Public Law 94-142, while not mandating educational programs for handicapped children 0-3 years old, has clearly been the most potent policy statement of the importance of serving preschool-aged children with special needs. Stedman contrasted P.L. 94-142 (along with the Rehabilitation Act and the Developmental Disabilities Act -- two other recent pieces of federal legislation affecting handicapped people) with earlier legislation related to child health and education. He noted particularly the way the recent legislation has made money available at the state and local levels and the advantages of this kind of funding:

> To the extent that laws are public policy expressed in their sharpest form, which I think they are -- they are basic rules of society -- I'd have to say that Public Law 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are the two most influential policy expressions, a third, I think, is the Developmental Disabilities Act. These three as a package have probably changed the landscape of services more significantly for handicapped persons and the configuration of training programs and service delivery systems than any three pieces of legislation that I can recall since the 1963 triad that came out which included the Maternal and Child Health Act, the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Act, and a Construction Act which made possible the University-affiliated mental retardation training programs, MR research centers, and community-based clinic programs.
>
> This current salvo really provides the impetus for state legislation and the budgeting of state and local service programs with state funds in a way that earlier legislation did not. The 1963 legislation provided principally federal money which was made available directly for local programming and construction, whereas the more recent legislation calls for federal "priming money," but it is largely state resources that need to be appropriated. In my judgment, this is a more satisfactory strategy because state money is more lasting, it's a more solid commitment at the local level and will have a longer term effect.

Maynard Reynolds also expressed strong concern about the funding of programs for handicapped children. Unlike Stedman, Reynolds focused not on the issue of federal versus state money, but on the "unit of funding." His remarks as presented here are in some ways a summary of his position discussed in the chapter on screening and early identification. Here, however, Reynolds emphasizes that early childhood is the main focus of the alternative funding systems which would support preventive intervention through serving populations of children who may be "at risk" for developmental problems rather than individual children labeled and placed in a disability category:

> In my view, one of the important things we have to do in much of school work, but especially in work with young children, is to address interventions to whole systems -- to communities of children and families, and to establish statistical approaches to evaluating these interventions. If public money is paying for intervention, then we must also become accountable to the public authorities on a kind of statistical basis, rather than presenting data child by child by child as they get labeled and so on. Intervention into a system is one of the ways out of the dilemma that so many communities face, of wanting very much to understand children earlier and better, to serve them well, and yet wanting to avoid the disservice of labeling them in what might be some simplistic fashion and thereby demeaning and stigmatizing the child.
>
> I believe that in what I'm saying here there are some ideas that could be applied rather generally in our special education programs. For example, I think that we need to get off the individual child in a labeled category as the funding unit, much the same as I think good health programs need to get off the kind of Blue Cross/Blue Shield mentality of paying off only when you have some specific disorder treated. Certainly all of the professions have to be concerned about getting ahead of those problems and adopting a preventive mode, an early mode, and not just waiting around until you have a major casualty or somebody in the hospital and then getting paid for services. The idea of being paid off for the individual client is not sufficient; it doesn't

propose an adequate conceptualization of the problems. If our services are confined to clinical types of funding systems and conceptualizations and directed only to people who can be classified in some simplistic fashion, we're on the wrong track and we must find some way out.

This will involve the difficult problem of reeducating ourselves, public policy makers, and those who fund and audit our programs. It's not easy, but it is really essential that we deal with that problem. We're getting ourselves into an awful bind and in no place is it clearer than in early education. You see, it's in early education where things can really come together, where we have a chance to work constructively for adequate child development, for adequate child education. If we do that well we won't have so many problems of learning disability, or perhaps we won't have so many kids who show extraordinary behavior problems. We can't just save our special resources until we have full blown casualties on our hands. We have to find some way of addressing these problems and yet being accountable at earlier levels, and that's going to take some change in conceptualization and that in turn relates to changes in funding systems.

Funding In Tough Times

While the system of funding services for children with special needs may indeed undergo some rather dramatic changes in the next several years, it is possible that appropriation levels for special services may also change dramatically. Donald Stedman predicted that tough economic times will dictate a trend of decreasing expenditures for exceptional individuals in the name of serving the "common good." He discussed the impact of a troubled economy and the relation between working with exceptional individuals and the common good:

Certainly cost will be a major issue. I think 1980 will be the high water mark in terms of funding for handicapped people at the state and federal level. I really think that most general assemblies are saying, "We've done all we can do and all we're going to do, what with

energy and inflation and other kinds of problems." Historically, in tougher economic times there's always been a movement away from individual rights toward the common good. "How much can we afford in the name of individual rights," and "How much can we afford to ignore in the name of the common good?" We're getting into these questions, I think; we've moved back toward the common good/national defense mentality, you know, and that's just an historic swing which seems to be correlated with tough economic times.

It involves "the economics of altruism." I think the majority of people still see working with the handicapped as an altruistic adventure, not as investment in human resources or in national defense, and not as a scientifically sound educational venture.

This chapter presents a fair summary of the problems that inadequate funding pose for child care and early education. Quality services obviously require a reasonable level of financial commitment. Given, however, the penchant (probably wise) of those involved professionally with the development of children for ending on a note of optimism, it is appropriate to conclude by considering Stedman's insight into the potential long-range advantages of economic hardship:

I think that one of the things that dwindling money forces you to do is to justify the continuation of what you're already doing in terms of whether it's effective or not. You're suddenly faced with improving what you've got rather than just staying busy or expanding what you've got. And that's probably good. The technology that we developed in weaponry production and biomedical engineering was largely developed during the thirties which were tough economic times. There was a winnowing out of the "hangers on" and the "expanders." The tough folks hung on; they were the inventors, and the developers, and the quality persons. I'm not recommending a depression regularly in order to create this, but it seems to be a fact that tough times are useful in the long run. They tend to prune out people who are riding shotgun and not contributing and to winnow back to the real contributors.

EPILOGUE

Upon rereading these pages I am struck by the way this "plain talk" has expressed the complexity of the important issues in early education and development. Considering the comments of the PGI faculty, one could not come away with the notion that early care or education is simple business. Indeed, a frequently recurring theme is that the problems facing those whose professional lives involve young children are extremely knotty.

This complexity can be unsettling. The technical and ethical difficulties underlying early identification, the puzzling controversy over mainstreaming, the challenge inherent in meeting the needs of parents from widely differing subcultures--these issues and others sometimes give early childhood professionals the feeling that their practice is on shaky ground. Certainly one does not feel bolstered knowing, for example, that some common practices are of questionable usefulness and could be considered unethical; nor does it enhance one's security to know that doing valid and useful research about young children is exceptionally difficult.

It is my hope, however, that these pages also convey the optimism expressed by nearly every member of the faculty. From one point of view, this book documents the progress which has been made over the last several years in separating the educational wheat from the chaff. Furthermore, these pages are filled with solutions as well as problems; recall, for example, the discussions of alternatives to screening, new models for teaching and teacher education, effective approaches for funding special education, and new research strategies that can capture the

intricacies of development. One cannot help being impressed, too, by the unanimous endorsement of the idea that closer linkages between researchers and practitioners will yield abundant, nutritious fruit.

Perhaps this book will be most useful if it helps to clarify our perspective on important contemporary issues. It certainly gives us some insight into the ways in which our distinguished colleagues speak about these matters off the official record. My hope is that this Plain Talk can indeed help to sharpen our own thinking and conversation as we continue to evaluate and reevaluate our practice.

William Stixrud